


VIRTUES

THE ETERNAL ESSENCE
AND FORM OF RELIGION



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Virtues



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VIRTUES

THE ETERNAL ESSENCE AND FORM OF RELIGION

By the Author of
"PROLEGOMENA TO THEISM"
and
"THE RELIGION OF THE SOUL."

Louis F. ✓ Anderson

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Further works of the author will soon be published in the following order:

1. SOUL AND CONSCIENCE.

(A psychology based on conscience and logic and the intrinsic interrelation of these sciences.)

2. THE FACE OF GOD AND THE PLAN OF DIVINE CREATION.

(A universal theosophy including the structure of the natural universe.)

PREFACE

The aim of this work is to give a concise explanation of virtues according to their essence and inherent order.

The spirit of religion must be known, not only in its general effects, as it is known, but also in its eternal and formal origin, and in all formal psychic processes, in order to be wholly understood and recognized as the most glorious and beneficent might of our lives.

Furthermore, the soul must be known as the spiritual subject of religion, and the whole order of our psychic forces must correspond with the superspiritual order of the might of God as revealed in conscience.

If this coherence is not made clear, then religion is exposed to unavoidable objections from all possible viewpoints and, as facts prove, has no dominating but merely a defensive power.

The relative correspondence of the soul with God, i. e. of all its formal capacities with the Attributes of God, is the ground of religion, and the whole power of logic must be applied to make this ground clear.

Religion is not only the chief urgency of the will and the most important aspiration of the heart, but also the highest and most exacting science and knowl-

edge. No science requires such great mental qualifications as does religion. The very fact that as yet religion is enshrouded in mysteries, manifestly proves the general deficiency of the human intellect. But the reason for this intellectual deficiency does not lie so much in the weakness of intellect, as such, as in our lack of interest in the sublimest task of life.

The form of this work may not satisfy those who look for popularity only, but it must be borne in mind that nothing popular has any assurance of permanence unless it is substantiated by logic, which means that it must be based on absolute ground, stated with incontrovertible consistency and brought down to clear facts. Popularity must follow great principles and not the reverse, and great principles require the strictest and the highest possible definition. The task of popularizing virtues depends on those who accept virtues with all the power of the will, the mind and the heart.

The presentation of virtues in this work clearly demonstrates the absolute ground and harmony of virtues and of their controlling might over the soul's forces and movements. It is to be hoped that religious teachers will obtain in this sublime science a spiritual instrument which, notwithstanding denominational leanings, will provide them with the religious power to carry the Voice of God into the deepest recesses of our life.

1920.

JUSTUS.

INTRODUCTION

Of all branches of human knowledge the knowledge of virtues has made the least progress. If we consider the ancient attempt to schematize the virtues, beginning with that of Manu: "To be contented, to repay good for evil, to suppress sensual passions, to refrain from unallowed gain, to purify ourselves, to keep the body in order, to search the scriptures, to know the Highest Spirit, to be truthful and not to yield to wrath—these are the ten commandments of the Brahmin," or, "The good Knowledge, the good Purity, the good Wisdom, the good Constancy be praised" of Vispered (Avesta), or, "The virtuous possess three treasures which they consider as their highest good: Love, Contentment and Humility" of Lao-Tse, and compare these with the four virtues of Plato: "Wisdom, Manliness, Moderation and Justice"—which, with various modifications, are accepted as the cardinal virtues of Christianity—and with St. Paul's "Faith, Hope and Charity," we find that the oriental exposition of virtues has not been surpassed or superseded. It is, however, noticeable that neither the oriental nor the occidental

conception of virtue has the necessary divine ground, logical order and completeness.

Logic is order of truth, and it would be disastrous for virtues were they not to follow, or, rather sustain this order. Moreover, virtues, despite a clear indication by Confucius, have never been presented as the concrete and consistent outflow from their supreme source, the Divine Attributes. Therefore, they have been treated illogically and too subjectivistically. This treatment is due to the anthropomorphic spirit in religion, which greatly impedes the intrinsic knowledge of virtues and their fulfillment in our daily life.

Greek philosophers defined virtue as an "excellence" of character. Seneca stated that "Virtue is something high, sublime, royal, invincible, indefatigable," and Plotinus that "Virtue is the assimilation with God." Spinoza calls it "Might of the spirit which defines the essence of man." Kant, Hegel and their followers call virtue "moral aptness" or "moral force of the will." Mgr. Gay said that "Virtue is a special power of ascending toward our heavenly Father." Some contemporaneous Christian ascetics claim it to be merely an "aptitude, an habitual disposition to do good." None, however, have approached the great definition of Alcuin that "Virtue is the habit of the spirit, the ornament of nature, the reason of life, the devotion of morals, the cult of Divinity, the honor of man, the merit of beatitude."

Roman theologians, according to the exclusiveness of their dogmas, discriminate between theological, moral, infused and acquired virtues. All virtues, however, are essentially religious, consequently they must exert their might on morals. Furthermore, as all virtues are “infused” by Divine operation and, at the same time, “acquired” by subjective determination before the subject can be meritoriously infused, or, more correctly, endowed with divine characteristics, it follows that the above discrimination and division is neither essential nor logical.

Having thus surveyed some of the most important ideas on virtue, it is necessary to present a profounder and broader statement of the subject.

Virtues, in their principle, are the *spirit and reflex of Divine Attributes* operating on conscience for the sake of the sanctification of the soul. As such they are the *highest gift of God and the eternal “reason” of life, the essential “cult of Divinity” and the supreme object of prayer, the sacramental content of conscience, the eternal essence, revelation and bond of religion, the absolute commandments of God and the sanctifying and beatifying laws of life, and, consequently, the supreme honor, power and duty of man.*

From the holiest inwardness of God proceed the eternal rays of virtues, flowing into the child of God. Hence the admiration of everything virtuous. Nothing commands such respect and so moves the noble heart

as virtuous deeds, virtuous thoughts and virtuous sentiments. The whole creation, spiritual and natural, is classified and characterized according to the degree of the personal affirmation and expression of virtue. And far are mind and heart from religion if they do not know and love virtue.

Considering virtue from an exclusively psychological standpoint, we find it to be not merely a "moral force" or "aptitude," but a superspiritual underdwelling might which moves and rules all moral forces. The spiritual and moral forces which we possess are *will*, *intellect*, and *sentiment*, and these, like all other worthy forces, are intrinsically related to the transcendent might of God, which constitute the eternal prototype of all worthy life. Will without *worthiness*, intellect without *truth* and sentiment without *love* are less than fantastic fictions; and psychologies without virtues are intellectual castles in the air.

The alleged isolation of the natural sciences from religion is a proud assertion, but it has no logic. No matter how much a radical scientist may endeavor to shirk or dodge the religious question, he cannot deny that all his scientific efforts are aimed at the knowledge of God's creation and at the benefit of humanity, and these are strictly religious motives. The fact that his observations pertain exclusively to physical and not also to spiritual and superspiritual objects is his own personal deficiency. He, like everyone else, knows that

worthiness, truthfulness and goodness are the most vital factors of life. No matter how, in the onesided training of his intellect, he may endeavor to explain conscience, he cannot deny it. Nor can he deny virtue. He cherishes its possession as others do, and in the hour of trial and tribulation has recourse to it as his strongest hold and sole consolation.

Natural science may make great scientists, but it makes no great souls. Were we to have the most exact knowledge of the universe, with all its spheres, phases, forces and creatures, and had we no virtue, life would be unendurable. Owing to their instrumental essence, applied sciences are concomitants of war with its appalling destruction of life and property, while such a simple virtue as sympathy with humanity prevents cruel disaster and heals the wounds inflicted by hatred. Conceding that our civilized factors were impotent to prevent the recent calamity, it is equally true that the so-called exact sciences have greatly aggravated it.

So long as the Will of God, in the form of virtue, is not the dogma of our faith, and the most vital rule of our education and life, our world must expect to face future disasters. Nothing endures except the Will of God, implanted in our conscience in the form of virtues. The drama of our earthly life is essentially the drama of the lack and impotence of human virtues, and nothing will lift us from the vortex of passions but a constantly renewed effort to rise above the darkness

of our sinful dispositions and habits and work with all zeal to implant and cultivate virtues in our hearts.

The spirit of virtue which is the faithful, truthful and loving Will of God, moves majestically in light and sacrifice. It visits each soul through the open gates of the humble heart, in order to urge, to encourage, to enlighten and to bless the more or less distant child of God's heavenly love. And where the gates of the heart are shut, He leaves a mark of His fatherly visitation and admonition. The virtuous soul knows these visitations and seeks and awaits them with a longing heart. The unvirtuous fears them and affects no distinct knowledge, though he cannot deny them.

The work of conscience is the work of virtues, no matter how great or how little their insistence may be. All the efforts of saints are exertions for the attainment of virtues. Mystics, philosophers, moralists and ascetics univocally extol and strive for virtues. They differ only in the contemporaneous frame of understanding, but they never differ at heart.

Many theologians object to the Stoical school on the alleged ground that it "divinizes" the virtues. This criticism arises from the fact that in the gospels there is no indication of the superspirituality of the virtues and, consequently, Christian theologians are unable to see the superspiritual ground of all virtues. To them virtues are mere psychological and "natural" manifestations, a natural "aptness to do good." Only the

miraculous Christian revelation and the “authoritative” interpretation of it, as evidenced by the exclusive Christian sacraments, are, to speak in their own term, “supernatural.” All the rest is “natural,” which, according to their timid interpretation, ultimately means the evil. Therefore, according to Christian dogmas, virtues must be Christianized in order to obtain divine blessing and efficiency. This is the nucleus of all more or less orthodox Christian theologies. It is astonishing how a pietistic onesidedness can so blind the human mind and so shrink the human heart as to suppress the Voice of God in the soul, which suppression is largely responsible for the lack of religious devotion in the Christian world.

Virtues need not be divinized. They in themselves are the issue of Divinity, the *formal Will of God in Conscience*. It may be said to the honor of the great school of the Stoa that it insisted on the term *conscience* as something divine, a term whose greatness has furthered and is furthering the rise of humanity more than historical dogmas, and to which term Christianity is not less indebted than other creeds—as the history of “Syneidesis” and “Synteresis” proves.

As to the other point, to maintain that there is such a thing as “natural virtue” is to destroy the possibility of any conception of virtue. Only a mind subversive of profounder religious sensibilities can assert such an absurdity. There is no term in human language which has done more intellectual and religious harm than the

term “natural,” and the misuse of this term by many Christian theologians constitutes an actual stain on the spiritual honor of Christianity.

It is perhaps needless to observe that the distinction made by Christian theologians between “natural” and “supernatural” virtues is highly pleasing to the atheist. The logical sense in every man makes him feel that there cannot be two issues in virtue; that all virtues must have a common ground somewhere. Hence, having the theologians own word for it that some virtues are “natural,” the atheist reasons from these premises to the perfectly logical conclusion that all virtues are “natural.” Thus it is that orthodoxy, in the excess of its denominational zeal, does not hesitate to advance doctrines which inevitably cripple the entire religious position.

Notwithstanding the hylozoistic definitions of the Sankhya and Greek philosophy, from which latter the vague term “nature” has survived, nature has a precise sense only when it pertains to the physical world. To attempt to discriminate between “natural” and “supernatural” virtue is to manifest the spirit of denominational insanity. The want of conscience and the consequent disorder in thinking, no less than factional pride, is the characteristic of denominational strife. And there will be no harmony in spiritual concepts and convictions until all religious views and efforts are grounded on the Divine Will in conscience—the sole

source of virtue and the essential content and form of religion. To endeavor to disprove this means to deprive religion of its real and logical origin and basis and to reduce it to a mere sentimental legend and subjective aspiration.

Some contend that a theory of conscience and virtues is too philosophical and not sufficiently practical for the masses, who need to be guided by an approved and sanctified external form, supported by scriptures and traditions. But events prove that, with the steady progress of enlightenment and deeper religious insight, the "holy scriptures" and traditions are losing their ground of sacredness, and that among the thinking classes of humanity there is a growing yearning for a profounder and broader understanding of religion; a religion which will bring the soul nearer to God and to mankind.

It is not true that established forms of religion are more practical because they have the sanction of ages. Religious forms, as well as political forms rise, decline and vanish, to make place for sublimer, greater, and more efficient forms. Conservatism is right in retaining the best, but it is wrong in imposing views and forms which do not correspond with the progress of human conscience, guided by the Will of God. It seems at times as though human conscience lags and fails, but history manifests that its progress is noticeable and that in the present day it is more potent than in the past.

The freedom and might of conscience was, is and always will be the chief issue of human endeavors, and the preparation of humanity for this eternal issue is the task of the great educators and leaders of mankind. The time of prophets and messiahs, with all their sentimental beauty, promise and consolation, is passing as the sun of conscience rises on the religious horizon of the human soul. The Will of God is advancing in light and sacrifice, nearer to humanity. And those most willing and apt, those with the virtues of humility, fortitude, wisdom, love and righteousness will lead their weaker brethren to a worthier life on earth and to a higher preparation for the great life beyond.

Insofar as the various religious denominations have represented the spirit of virtue, their achievements are blessed with due honor and gratitude. But only thus far. The factional zeal displayed by so many churches is not a divine zeal. It is a zeal of exclusiveness, emulation, ambition, envy, intolerance and persecution. The past history of denominational cruelty and the still prevalent denominational hostility prove the presence of human ungodliness in religious doctrines. Nowhere has the name of God been so terribly abused as in religious denominations. This corruption of religious sublimity and veracity, so manifest in practice, proves the necessity for purification and elevation of the religious standard and of profounder religious understanding.

The church of God stands on eternal ground. Its

infallible dogma, forever implanted in the soul by the Superspirit of God, is *conscience*—the highest tribunal of honor and faith, of righteous conviction and of all questions and answers. There is nothing above it except God Himself and nothing beneath it except the soul. None dares to dispute this grandest and most powerful fact of life.

If conscience can be distorted, then reason can be twisted a thousandfold, for reason depends on conscience for its ultimate verdict. Skepticism and atheism are fostered by dogmas without conscience, and greater and lesser crimes are due to the lack of a thorough teaching of virtues in our homes, schools and churches. Where conscience is not taught to be the absolute commandment of all our deeds, thoughts and sentiments, there virtues are not only ignored but are not even respected. The one who is not taught to feel God at the ground of his soul, but to trust only to the memory of a distant legend, true or untrue, is relatively distant from God.

The mystics have felt this and spoken of it, although they have not explained it clearly. Their course has been too sentimental, but their sentiments have held the right direction. Cleaving more to virtues than to external observance, mystics have obtained an inkling of the profounder paths of life. On their sentiments, rather than on their thoughts, philosophical theories have been constructed. But all theories fail if they

are not grounded on conscience and adaptable to practical life.

There are but few metaphysically inclined minds in our human community, and very rare are those with proper metaphysical training. Furthermore, the mind alone cannot attain the living conscience. Great visions are like unfathomed seas, and scanning their surface will not solve their depth. One must live within the profoundest vision, with full intensity of the will and heart, in order to see its silent might and its complete and unchangeable order through its seeming mystery.

It is not true that human conscience is as fickle as human reason. Man reasons very seriously when it is a matter of direct conscience. All axioms of life, religious, social and personal, if lived by, are acknowledged and accepted by the individual conscience mainly.

Assuredly, the degrees of individual conscience vary; therefore, it is always the highest individual conscience that leads and clarifies. Conscience possesses its inalienable authority, regardless of religious and social establishments. Thus the Voice of God sounds first in one soul, then in a few and then in many until the prevailing religious and social views are subjected to a profounder scrutiny by conscience; then the old standards of life decline and fall as if struck by a transcendent decree.

The Voice of God causes epoch-making changes in

religious conviction, and in consequent social advancement, mainly through the human conscience. If humanity is predisposed to good will and concord, these advancing stages of conscience are effected peacefully, as if by inspiration. If not, discord causes strife, followed by disaster and chastisement.

Conscience is the highest and most effective nucleus of life. To say: "that man has no conscience" is the most damning accusation of dishonor. He may be destitute of every form of religion, of every national and social ideal or standing, he may be steeped in crimes and sins, but he never is wholly deprived of conscience. The slightest compunction on his part proves it.

As a sublime conscience is the indestructible crown of personal worthiness, so a low conscience is the last refuge of the wicked. Conscience is not only the essential honor of the soul, not only the accuser of iniquity, but also the alleviator of human wretchedness; for it yields before no brutality, and its sentence, however severe, is full of dignity and compassion.

Our highest attainment is *heaven*, the sight of God *face to face*, the life in His immediate presence, and the possession of sanctified might, light and sacrifice that pass human understanding. No matter how inviting are some denominational promises, let no man deceive himself or be deceived into believing that he can live in the Divine presence until this holiest and sublimest

state of consummate participation in, cooperation with and affirmation of God's Will is attained.

Virtues are our eternal calling, our insuperable power, our torch of eternal visions and the inextinguishable flame of eternal love and beatitude. They are the transcendent essence of the soul's life.

EXCERPTS FROM SCRIPTURES OF EGYPT, INDIA, PERSIA, CHINA, AND THE GREEK AND ROMAN PHILOS- OPHERS AND POETS

Before defining the essence of virtues, and describing the order and content of each virtue in particular, it will be of avail to glance at some of the most important sentences on religion, conscience and virtues, contained in the scriptures of Egypt, India, Persia and China, and in the words of the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets. Those of the Old and New Testaments of the Jews and Christians, with their rich content relative to the same subject, are too well known to need repetition.

In these excerpts we find that the essential content of religion is not an exclusive property of any denomination, that the Divine Superspirit operates on conscience in every part of the world and in every age of human history. An unprejudiced comparison will fill us with due and solemn appreciation for those who have been the great tutors and prophets of other spiritual families than our own.

In these solemn utterances of the leaders of the human conscience we notice, not theological, but only

psychological differences. They all hold fast to the one faith in one Absolute God, whether they define Him as Supreme Essence, Heaven, Creator, Lord, the Highest Good or Father. But the indications of the path to God differ according to the peculiarity of psychological or spiritual predispositions and historical surroundings. Thus some are philosophical and poetical, others rational and practical, and others more sentimental. The understanding and valuing of this ancient spirit of virtue will aid the understanding of our own religious progress.

EGYPT

I am Ra, who at my rising ruleth all things.
I am the great self-made God.

Praise be unto Thee, Osiris, Lord of Eternity,
who appearest in many guises, and whose attributes
are glorious.

Praise to Thee, Who art mighty in Thy hour,
great and mighty Prince, Lord and Creator of eternity.

Praise to Thee, Whose throne is Right and
Truth, Who hateth fraud and deceit.

Praised be Thy face, Oh King of both worlds,
Oh Creator of the universe, Whose eyes are like rays
of light, Who blessest the skies with the splendor of
Thy light

Praised be Thy face, Osiris, Lord of the
Posaune, Weaver of divine dwelling, Lord of the
clouds of heaven. Let me approach Thee, my Prince;
purify my hands from trespasses. Thou bringest me
near Thee, Thou enlightenest those who accord with
Thee

I am He Who with darkness surrounds the
shining raiment of heavenly floods when I speak as
Lord through the Posaune. Remember the Posaune

. . . I am leading My people who fear my arms
and the tremendous power of My Voice . . .

Praised am I by the leaders of the clouds of
heaven; the songs of praise of human congregations
exalt Me, the shining Creator of might above them,
Who sees their acts, the Lord of heavenly floods, Who
hears them in Wisdom.

—*Book of the Dead.*

INDIA

How can I lift myself to Varuna? Will He accept my sacrifice without wrath? How is it possible to contemplate with a pure spirit the God full of mercy? . . . Oh mighty and invincible God! Tell me this.

In my innocence and ardor I shall adore Thee . . . Have mercy on me, Oh Almighty God, have mercy on me!

Thirst—though in the midst of water—has devoured Thy adorer; have mercy on me, Oh Almighty God, have mercy on me!

Every time, Oh Varuna, that we common men commit any offense against the armies of heaven, every time that we violate the law . . . have mercy on us, Oh Almighty Lord, have mercy on us!

It is the Divine Spirit, oh beloved soul, which is the one object for us to see, to hear, to understand, to meditate upon. If Him we see, hear, understand and know—the whole universe is known to us.

—*Rig-Veda.*

The Highest Spirit is hidden in all things. If the wise, through inward communication, has under-

stood the Divine Spirit—Who is so difficult to see, Who is hidden, Who permeates nature, Who lies in the heart of man and Who dwells in profundity—then he is above joy and grief.

—*Yagur-Veda*.

Beatitude, which conforms with true life, is not the beatitude of this world, but the one in which consists the true essence of the soul.

—*Upnek-Hat*.

Kingdom . . . renown and wealth, all put together, do not make up one-sixteenth part of the value of virtue.

—*Mahabharata*.

Oh friend of virtue, the sublime spirit whom thou thinkest to be thine own, dwells constantly in thy breast, and is an omniscient observer of thy good and evil deeds.

To be contented, to repay good for evil, to suppress sensual desires, to renounce unallowed gain, to purify oneself, to restrain oneself, to study the scriptures, to understand the Highest Spirit, to be truthful and not to be misled by wrath—these are the ten commandments of the Brahmin.

The soul is its own witness; the soul is its own refuge; do not injure the *conscience* of thy soul, the highest inward witness of men.

The sinful say in their hearts: “No one sees

us.” Verily God sees them clearly and so does the spirit in their breasts.

Gather by degrees a provision of virtuous actions.

Bodies are cleansed by water; the spirit through truth.

The purity of speech and of heart is the richest fruit of true religion.

When justice, wounded by vice, approaches the tribunal of judgment, and the judges do not remove the dart, then they themselves should be struck by it.

When, before an assembly of good men, a witness knowingly makes a different statement from what he saw or heard, he, after death, shall be thrown into the region of horror, debarred from heaven.

Sacrifice is denied by a lie, the merit of austere practice by vanity, the fruit of charity by fraudulent action . . . each pious act accomplished by hypocrisy goes to the evil demons. He who is mild, patient, a stranger to perverse association, obtains heaven by his charity.

The whole humanity is kept in order through lawful rigor, but the latter must be just.

True goodness is susceptible to virtuous love, is free from all passions, and clear as the purest light.

—*Manu*.

The whole of religion consists in three sen-

tences: Purify the spirit, abstain from vice and practise virtue.

There are seven jewels of the law: Purity, Calmness, Comprehension, Bliss, Wisdom, Perfection and Enlightenment, which manifest themselves in seven ways; in earnest meditation, in the great struggle against sin, in the aspiration for saintship, in moral power, in producing the organs of spiritual sense, in wisdom and in righteousness.

There are four roads to saintship: the will to acquire saintship, the necessary exertion, a thorough preparation of the heart and self-discipline.

The fragrance of flowers does not expand against the wind, but the fragrance of the virtuous expands even against the wind; it permeates the whole world.

Royalties with their glory and splendor vanish, but truth is immutable and eternal.

Birth does not give true nobility, but a virtuous, noble soul.

He who conquers himself is a greater hero than he who conquers a thousand enemies a thousandfold.

Become strong in virtue thyself, before thou teachest others.

Conquer wrath through gentleness, the evil through the good, the avaricious through liberality, and the liar through truth.

Do not make friends of bad and common men, but choose the virtuous and the best.

May everybody be zealous in doing good and turn his mind from evil, for he who is negligent in this takes pleasure in evil.

No fire is so wild as passions, no fetters so fast as hatred.

—*Buddha.*

If those who have power do not submit to the law of the highest, then all is lost.

—*Harivansa.*

I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all existent things.

They who worship Me with true devotion are in Me and I with them.

I am the Way, Supporter, Lord, Witness, Abode, Refuge, Friend.

That man obtains the perfect state who honors by his proper work Him from Whom all things have issued, and by Whom this all is revealed.

Fearlessness, purity of heart, attention to profoundness of wisdom, charity, sacrifice, devotion, repentance, sincerity, innocence, truthfulness, gentleness, renunciation, abandon, mildness, compassion, chastity, good-heartedness, steadfastness, fortitude, patience, constancy, purity and modesty belong to those who are walking the Divine path.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

PERSIA

All that is most beautiful, pure, immortal, splendid, good, the good spirit, the good reign, the good law and the good wisdom—all these we praise.

Everything glorious is united in the pure through true thinking, speaking and acting. Through his deeds the world gains in purity.

False prayers kill the spirit of life.

Immortality is the desire of the pure.

—*Yasna*.

Hail and glory to the pure!

Glory to wisdom!

Glory to righteousness!

That which is seized in spirit, the good knowledge, the good purity, the good wisdom and the good steadfastness be praised.

—*Vispered*.

The law that Ormuzd made; rightness and righteousness be thy rule.

The perfection of the soul be praised!

I desire that the wise be happy and that the truthful be blessed.

Praised be the man who works for the good of everybody.

Be full of fortitude and wholly pure! All power and goodness be present.

Struggle with thy adversary in a just manner.

All that I should have thought and have not thought, that I should have said and have not said, that I should have done and have not done—all these I repent.

Pride, vanity, avarice, . . . wrath, envy, . . . impudence, impure intention and vision, obstinacy, discontent with my destiny, wilfulness, sloth, disrespect for others, . . . irreligious rebellion against Divine Might, false testimony, false judgment, idolatry, theft, robbery, adultery, debauchery, lies, ungratefulness, disobedience, vindictiveness, hardness of heart and all remaining sins—I repent.

—*Khorda-Vesta*.

CHINA

The virtuous possess three treasures which they consider as their highest good: Love, Contentment and Humility.

Purity of spirit and spiritual clearness are required to understand the just, the good, the beautiful, the true and the perfect in the world, and to act accordingly in order to be a model of human worthiness.

The wise gathers not worldly, but spiritual, everlasting treasures.

He, to whom Heaven is disclosed, knows the eternal.

—*Lao-tze.*

Man received the gift of the divine spirit from Heaven . . . and what in us corresponds with this gift is called Tao (divine) which, if clearly understood, is religion.

I know well why the divine (Tao) is not clearly understood: the more endowed men cherish false ideas of the divine and those who are not spiritually gifted do not heed it.

The wise one follows clearly the guidance of the commandments of God, and his deeds and instructions are in conformity with the divine mandate. For

the wise one is supported by the indwelling, eternal and immutable truth (conscience).

The Tao, as the wise perceives it, is, owing to the immeasurable plenitude of blessing which it imparts, everywhere so abundant and clear, and yet so mysterious and invisible in its supernaturality.

Therefore, all men can, regardless of their spiritual limitations, possess some knowledge of the Divinity . . . all men, even the unendowed are able to obey the commandments of God; but even the most intelligent are unable to accomplish this perfectly.

The greatness and sublimity of the universe imparts to all men the feeling of awe and admiration, and, in the comparison of oneself with the universe, the feeling of one's own unworthiness and impotence.

The Spirit of God, dwelling in the spirit of man, is the One Who, through His blessing superabundance, causes the divine virtue in us.

Though we do not see Him, and though we do not hear Him, we perceive His Voice, for He is eternally inseparable from all men. The Spirit of God decrees that all men become better, more intelligent and more nearly perfect and that they cleave and make others cleave to His commandments in the evergrowing inward unity; for this Spirit is everywhere, far above us and yet always around us.

In order to attain the divine, one must first

endeavor to perfect himself in virtues, and after this attainment he will be permeated with humaneness.

Humaneness is the only true human in man, that which heightens the love of kindred and of our neighbor to a principle.

Knowledge, love of man and fortitude are the treasures which derive from the world-permeating heavenly virtue.

For Eternal Truth is the Divine in Heaven and inward truth the divine in the soul.

The Divine of Heaven and earth is inconceivable, infinite, full of sublimity and wisdom; it is immutable and eternal.

The same Divine is the sublimest which reveals itself in the profoundest ground (Conscience) of the soul.

Only the one who on earth has attained the perfect knowledge of truth, will be enabled to reconcile and unite all single fragments into a great structure of the being and to establish it as the fundamental law of the world; for he knows the Creator and Sustainer of Heaven and earth. Verily, he knows Him! And, therefore, he is conscious Whom to trust and to Whom abandon himself, i. e. to the almightiness of His Love, the harmony of His Creation and to the infinity of His Heaven.

The Book of Songs says: I love the perfectly pure, the immaculate and glorified virtue, but not the

loud voice and high sounding words which are calculated for the external appearance of virtue.

Never and never will people be converted by high sounding phrases, brilliant words and outer semblance!*

Three things the wise must esteem: the laws of Heaven, great souls and the words of the noblest.

Faithfulness and sincerity are the highest virtues.

Oh, how the law of the duty of man is holy and grand! It is an ocean without shores! It produces and embraces all things; it attains Heaven through its dignity.

Perfection is the beginning and the end of all creatures. Without perfection no creature could exist.

A superior man is afflicted by his impotence, but not by being ignored or misconceived by man. His benevolence is extended to all.

He who does not conscientiously search for the good, cannot work sincerely for his betterment and does not attain perfection. In all that thou doest, forget not that thou doest it before the sight of Heaven.

* The preceding seventeen paragraphs are excerpted from the work of Reinhold von Plaenckner on Confucius' Tchong-Yong, *Der Unwandelbare Seelengrund* (The Immutable Ground of the Soul), translated and explained from the Chinese, F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1878. It is astonishing that it has required over twenty four centuries to obtain a due insight into the religious profoundness of Confucius, whose teachings, to quote Plaenckner, have been "corrupted" and reduced to a mere ethical system.

If the soul is not moved at worship, it is as if we did not pray.

Thou mayest deceive the eye of man, but not those of Heaven. Its eyes are clear and permeating.

Oh, how terribly and sublimely marches the judgment of the Highest Lord of Heaven!

Riches and honor are good . . . but if these things do not conform with virtue, they must be despised.

The honorable one looks on virtue, the low-minded on riches. The former follows the commands of the law and the latter his profit.

The virtuous one finds his felicity only in the possession of virtue.

Admiration of virtue without imitation has no merit.

The superior man loves the good and pursues it; apart from this he has no likes and dislikes.

It is better to have virtue with want and ignominy, than wealth and honor without virtue.

The virtuous one is hard to satisfy, but easy to serve. Nothing that thou doest to please him satisfies him unless it is strictly right.

The good man is loved by his good neighbors and hated by his bad ones.

The truly eminent man is genuine and straightforward; he loves righteousness, weighs people's words and looks at their countenances. He desires to help

everybody. That is the eminent man, though he may not be a famous one.

Thou shouldst love thy fellow man with all the power and intensity of thy affection.

—*Confucius*.

The law of the great study, or practical philosophy, consists in re-establishing and developing into light the luminous principle of reason (conscience) which we have received from heaven; in regenerating mankind, and in placing definitely our destiny in Perfection or the Supreme Good.

The great man is the one who has never lost the innocence and candor of his childhood.

The chief things to be aimed at are virtue and benevolence.

He who feels no shame of evil and does not hate it is no man. Shame and hate of evil are the beginning of virtue.

He who has no compassion is no man.

The rule of life is reciprocity. It consists in rightness of heart and of loving my neighbor as myself.

—*Mencius*.

GREECE

Calmly bear the decrees of God.

—*Thales.*

Virtue endures eternally; it is imperishable.

—*Solon.*

On steep rocks dwells virtue, praised by the songs of holy virgins. No mortal sight can observe or approach it, unless labor and effort and man's highest courage uplifts him to it.

—*Simonides.*

Mortal! Take the right faith. It is from God that humanity has its origin.

Wisdom and virtue are our best security.

Always exercise justice with diligence in words and deeds.

If thou canst do good, thou shouldst do it; here power is the neighbor of necessity.

—*Pythagoras.*

Grant, Oh Father, that I remain virtuous, of pure conduct and pure hand!

Willingly bows the wise man before eternal destiny.

Clear and simple is the voice of truth.

No pain can injure the soul of the free man, except unworthiness.

When one seeks fortune through wrong, his evil conscience tortures him unto death.

—*Aeschylos.*

Men are a dream of shadows, but where a ray from God is sent there shines a clear day to a beautiful life.

—*Pindar.*

Never forget the reverence due to Divinity.

There is an eternal unwritten law brought by Divinity. This law is not of today nor of yesterday, but it impresses everybody and extends as far as the infinite vault of heavens and the immense surface of the earth.

No commands of man I respect so highly that I obey them before the immutable and unwritten laws.

May the aim of my life be to retain pious purity in word and deed, and to be faithful to eternal righteousness, which descends from the heights of heaven.

The one who is conscious of his soul's nobility will not endure a dishonorable life.

Happy is he to whom, of all gifts, God gives a clear mind! Oh, man, in thy pride do not violate the laws of God!

Not words, but deeds impart splendor to our life.

The punishment of God consists in blinding the heart.

—*Sophocles*.

Truth remains truth even if it hurts.

No one can withdraw from the might of love.

Wisdom and piety are never seized by violence.

May a modest mind always adorn us, the most beautiful gift of God.

The most beautiful glory for the children of a noble father is to equal him in virtue.

Nothing thrives that is born of sin.

—*Euripides*.

Reflect and do not disdain the invisible substance; by their effect thou wilt appreciate their power and worship Divinity.

Who, do you believe, has brought the invisible laws? It is God Who has prescribed them to man, and the first law of all, recognized by the whole world, commands worship of God.

That which comes from virtue is beautiful and good.

Man is not in the least bettered by gold and silver, but the words of the wise enrich with virtue those who possess it.

Ingratitude is injustice.

—*Socrates*.

The one is the principle of all. It is God Who rules all things, always one, always by Himself, immov-

able, only similar to Himself and different from all the rest.

—*Philolaus.*

The Divine is the Beautiful, the Good and that which is similar to it.

The best course of life is the exercise of justice, and to live and to die for the sake of every other duty.

Respect nothing more highly than what is just, not even life itself.

Blessed is he who attains wisdom and right understanding, even though it be not until his old age.

—*Plato.*

Oh virtue, thou highest praise of life . . .
to die for thy beauty is enviable! Thou bendest the
mind to the highest and most splendid. Immortal thou
art!

The richest and noblest pleasure is the one
which a good man reaps from virtuous deeds.

Perfect virtue and perfect life impart beatitude.

Friends are one soul in two bodies.

Justice is the virtue of treating each one according to his merits.

—*Aristotle.*

Hail to Thee, Oh Thou most glorious of
immortals. Being, adored under a thousand names,
Zeus, eternally mighty, Thou master of nature, Thou,
Who rulest all things by law! It is the duty of each
mortal to address Thee with his prayers, for of Thee

we are born and it is Thou Who has endowed us with speech, we the only ones of all the creatures which live and creep on earth. To Thee I offer my praises, to Thee the eternal homage of my songs! Supreme King of the universe, Thy empire extends over all things. Nothing on earth, Oh benevolent God, nothing is achieved without Thee; nothing in the eternal and Divine heaven, nothing in the seas, except crime committed by the wicked in his folly . . . Zeus, author of all the good! God, hidden in dark clouds, redeem men from their fateful ignorance, disperse the darkness of their souls, Oh our Father, and give them to understand the thought with which Thou rulest the world with justice. . . .

—*Hymn of Cleanthes.*

Our fatherland is the region whence we descended here below. It is there that our Father has His dwelling. But how are we to return thither; what means are we to employ for this journey? . . . Each man must begin to make himself beautiful and divine, to obtain the view of the Beautiful and of Divinity. We are by no means separated from the One, we are not distant from Him . . . for we derive our breath from Him and in Him we subsist.

—*Plotinus.*

ROME

Nothing more divine gave God to man than his conscience.

The sublimest state of virtues is conscience.

Reason demands that virtues be the rulers of all things.

Virtue, magnanimity, patience and fortitude bring balm into the wounds of grief.

All glory of virtue consists in action.

No duty is more necessary than the fulfillment of gratitude.

Nothing is more lovable than virtue; nothing conquers the heart better than virtue.

The crown of old age is esteem, but only after a virtuous youth can this be attained.

Only a strong and wise man is capable of exercising justice.

Glory and esteem to that state where the moral law towers above all apparent gain.

Love is almighty and fear impotent.

True goodness of heart extends to the whole humanity.

Without love and benevolence life has no attraction.

Love of man manifests itself in a twofold manner: through free giving and through rewarding good deeds.

Without justice there is no virtue.

Friendship is nothing else than the most perfect unity with respect to religious principles and humanity, joined with benevolence and tenderness.

Without truth there is no friendship.

The ground for the steadfastness and constancy for which we are searching in friendship is faithfulness.

In friendship there is no fiction and no disguise; all is genuine and free.

Worthy of friendship are those who in themselves possess the ground of love, a rare species of man, as, generally, all excellent things are.

Make it a holy law of friendship that we demand nothing shameful and that we accede to no such request.

Friendship is possible only among virtuous men.

True friendship lasts forever.

A short life is long enough to permit one to live virtuously and honorably.

Death is no evil, but something good.

In the senseless tumult of battle, in the hand to hand fight there is something base and brutal.

—Cicero.

Virtue is something high, sublime, royal, invincible, indefatigable.

May virtue be everywhere in the foreground; may it carry the banner!

Faith is the holiest good of the human heart.

One should do all one can to prove his gratitude.

Benevolence gladdens constantly the grateful; the ungrateful, however, but once.

The ingratitude of many should not keep us from serving humanity.

Accustom thyself to speak the truth and to listen to truth.

We must follow our conscience, not the judgment of man.

How much religion demands—the love of our neighbor, justice, faithfulness—all of which is not in the tables of civil law!

Virtue is difficult to find; it requires a leader and guide, but passions are learned without a teacher.

Nothing so easily inspires the mind with good as the intercourse with virtuous men.

To no one is virtue closed; it is open and accessible to all. It invites everyone, free-born, freed, slaves, kings and ostracized; it regards neither family nor wealth—man alone suffices it.

Joy is not a reward of virtue, nor a cause of virtue, but an addition. The highest good lies in the

inwardness of conscience and the essence of the noble soul.

Virtue acts not through compulsion.

Before all things we must look into ourselves.

Why do we deceive ourselves? Not outside of us, but in us dwells our infirmity—it cleaves to our inwardness.

Thou givest much, even if thou givest nothing but a good example.

No one is punished so severely as the one who is placed on the rack of repentance.

The righteous soul is full of love toward others; it is born to mutual help.

What is the most glorious thing in the life of man? To rise in spirit above the menaces and promises of fate, to bear misfortune with cheer, to reject from the heart all evil thoughts, to raise pure hands to heaven, not to envy your neighbor his possessions, a benevolent heart, and each moment to be ready to die.

By whomsoever thou art derided and offended, thou wilt not suffer when virtue is with thee—offense never reaches the wise.

There is no more difficult art than the art of life.

—*Seneca.*

Thou art a detached fragment of Divinity;

thou containest in thyself a portion of its Being. Why, then, art thou so ignorant of thy noble birth?

I am a rational creature; it is my duty to praise God. This is my occupation. In this task I never fail, and I invite thee to sing praises with me.

God has not limited Himself only to create thee; He has confided thee to thyself, that thou guardest thyself. Dost thou not remember this? And wilt thou contaminate what He has confided in thee?

Have no will but the will of God, and who shall restrain thee, who shall compel thee more than He? When thou hast such a guide, and conformest thy will and inclination to His Will, what needest thou fear of disappointment?

—*Epictetus.*

VIRTUES, THE SPIRIT AND REFLEX OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The principle of virtues lies in the Superspirit of Divine Attributes, whose relative and formal reflex constitutes the transcendent essence and form of conscience. For this reason the form of conscience is the underdwelling form of the spiritual soul, precisely as the spiritual form of the soul is the essential form of the physical body. The spiritual will is, as we all know, not an independent wilfulness, for the will must cleave to worthiness, fortitude and blissfulness in order to be esteemable, strong and felicitous. Nor is the intellect a mere instrument of indiscriminate knowledge, like memory. For the sake of its dignity and power, it must seek truth, think wisely and express itself without deceiving duplicity. And the heart cannot be a mere conglomerate of all sorts of feelings, but must be a repository of love, righteousness and goodness, as we rightly expect from every man who is not insane or totally depraved. Thus there is a dominating might in conscience which relates to each form of our soul, and this might is the formal Superspirit of Divine Attributes.

There are no accidents in Divine revelation and operation. Every act of God is eternally formal, lawful and dominating. If man does not see this truth, it is his own fault, which is mainly due to his indifference in contemplating the essence and form of his own conscience. Consequently, the man who does not contemplate the Superspirit of God, thereby fails to make himself worthy to know the great principle and destiny of his essential spirit, and, therefore, must remain in that spiritual darkness which so depresses him.

Holiness, Truth and Love are clearly expressed in conscience as the transcendent manifestation of the Life of God. Holiness reveals the determining might, Truth the defining might, and Love the sentimental might of God. Each of these attributes constitutes a super-essential form, manifesting its unconditional and incomparable absoluteness in conscience, as well as in all important and final acts of the self-conscious and self-sentient will. From these attributes emanates the essence of our life, the sublime deeds, the clear and unerring visions and the overwhelming sentiments of sacrifice, righteousness and goodness.

Our psychic essence consists of self-conscious and self-sentient volition, and, as such, must adhere to the supreme objective superessence from which our subjective essence of life is derived, in order to participate in Holiness, Truth and Love.

The very expressions, Holiness, Truth and Love,

convey the meaning of absolute might. They are manifestly Divine properties and not our properties. But our relative properties, the will, intellect and sentiment, are for the participation in Divine properties or attributes. There is no other meaning to our life, and any other alleged or pretended meaning is utterly illogical and absurd.

Holiness, Truth and Love are the superessential ground of logical laws. In intellectual visions, no clearness is possible without this absolute ground of logic. Holiness as the determining *principle*, Truth as the clarifying *process* and Love as the sanctifying *effect* are the profoundest laws of all our thinking and the root and branch of our whole life. Our will must want holiness for the sake of its own worthiness, and all its motives must be directed toward sanctification, because sanctification constitutes the glorious participation in Divine Life. Our intellect must cleave to Truth for the sake of its infallibility of visions, and our heart must be the vessel of the purest and most intense love, for the sake of the eternal fruition of virtuous life. There is no escape from sanctification, for sanctification is the very reason of our existence; it is our destiny, the life eternal in its most concrete meaning.

Consequently, each Divine Attribute is the superessential prototype, the transcendent spirit and the absolute demand of our life. Its logic is as clear as its demand is irrevocable. Let us only enter into this

inwardness of our conscience, and we shall clearly see how our will, intellect and sentiment are continually circling around the Divine Attributes. Even the wicked cannot free himself from them. It is always the sanctity of motives and deeds, always the absolute testimony of truth, always the purity and unselfishness of sentiments, which cause the judgment of every theory and practice of life.

The profoundness and greatness of the soul lies in the cleaving to conscience, the superspiritual reflex of Divine Attributes. Let no one be deceived or confused by any statement to the contrary, for there is no theory which does not depend for its direct support on conscience, and no practice which is not confronted by conscience. No scripture is as holy and no guide as powerful as this formal Superspirit of God. Theories and scriptures may contribute to the awakening of conscience, but Divine operation is always first in causing the inward contact with the soul.

In considering an important statement, scriptural or oral, why does the soul pause and think so seriously? Because it consults its conscience. What does it mean to consult conscience? It means the search for absolute certainty of the purity of intention, of the clearness of this purity, and of its sacred and beneficent effect in us and in others, which only an implicit faith in the absolute Holiness of God can impart.

Through scriptures and teachers, God evokes the

search after Himself, but it is always He Who first causes this summons. Words are only cooperative instruments, and therein consists their dignity and power; but the first act is the call of the Voice of God, a call which, if responded to readily and joyfully, crowns the soul with glory, infuses fortitude and fills it with heavenly joy, as only a responsive child of God can be filled.

The child of God is not a child in the human sense, as the deriders of religion like to insinuate. The child of God is the greatest being in God's creation, the participator in Divinity, the cooperator with Divine might, creative and operative, and the whole-souled affirmer of all that is holiest, truest and best.

The child of God is the eternal emanation of Divine worship, the highest heroism personified and the blessed inmate of eternity. He is the resplendent torchbearer of truth, the sage among the wisest, and the sincerest, most veracious, and most modest friend and helper.

The child of God is the living vessel of unrestrained sacrifice, the cooperative guardian and enforcer of justice, and the immortal example of benevolence, magnanimity, holy enthusiasm and spiritual beauty. In the highest existential states, the child of God is the archangel par excellence, the highest eminence after God, endowed with powers incomprehensible to the human mind. If mankind had but one glimpse of the vision of this existential eminence, all pride, vanity,

envy, greed and lust would vanish like a straw that is thrown into a fiery furnace.

Virtues are the moving spirit to the noblest life, and all worthy men want to adore, to contemplate and to embrace their spirit. Even the low soul is influenced by their magnificence, for intimately it hates itself for its lack of virtue. Our rise is the rise of virtues in our characters, and our debasement is due to our blindness to and neglect of virtues. True progress is impossible without progress in virtues. No nation, no creed and no individual is safe that does not cling to virtuous progress. Thus it must be, for perfectibility is the absolute law of progress.

Divine perfection is the moving might of holiness. Its purpose is to sanctify each being that has the right and duty to participate in Divine life. Thus sanctification is the absolute condition of this participation. Its path, its light and atmosphere are virtues, the immortal powers of the soul. Weak souls cannot participate in Divine grandeurs, for they do not live on Divine grandeurs but on Divine mercy; and it is for this reason that our souls cry: Oh Lord! Have mercy on us!

VIRTUES, THE HIGHEST GIFT AND ETERNAL REASON OF LIFE

Our life is a gift of God. Neither we nor any creature has obtained life by virtue of its own forces. Nor is our spiritual life a "necessary" emanation from Divinity, for there is no necessity in God. Necessity is a state of dependence from the absolute Superbeing. The Holiness, Truth and Love of God are superessential and, consequently, absolutely free. Perfection of God is intrinsically superessential freedom. Were it not for this fact, the soul could have neither relative freedom nor any consciousness of freedom.

Freedom is essentially a spiritual law, the relative reflex of Divine Perfection. Those who are not conscious of this insisting fact in conscience, must inevitably become the victims of a mechanistic fatalism, this latter view being strictly logical from their viewpoint. If these thinkers, however, were more exact in their definitions, they would use no such terms as "absolute determinism" or "unconscious will." "Absolute determinism" presupposes an Absolute Determinator, Who cannot be conceived without the attributes of Holiness, Truth and Love, and "unconscious will" is non-existent

and impossible. There is no will without consciousness.

Freedom is frequently called the greatest gift of our life, but this is only true in a processive sense; for the principal purpose of freedom is the cooperation with Divine Holiness, Truth and Love. Remove these holy might, as the prime object of our life's endeavor, from our relative freedom, and this freedom would be worse than meaningless, it would become a terror. Actually, the gift of life is the gift of freedom for virtues, the participating, cooperating and affirming powers in Divine life. The very fact that our life is a free gift of Divine Love leads us to the actuality of giving. No one is satisfied with life unless he can give, and every soul hates a man who never gives. Giving is the test and proof of his worthiness and of his lasting joy.

Each virtue is a transcendent form and mode of giving. Through humility the soul renders itself to God, as to the supreme Giver of its own life. This is the soul's sublimest determination, by virtue of which the holy mutuality and harmony of the soul with God is realized; it is the beginning, the course and the end of the most intimate and pressing necessity of our life. The slightest neglect of humility causes disorder, and the disregard of humility causes spiritual and social anarchy. All sins and crimes may be traced back to lack of humility and all spiritual rise and progress to its realization.

The vision and the sense of the divine gift of life

cannot be attained without this fundamental virtue. The soul is not the absolute possessor of its own life; it is only a relative possessor, for it cannot give life to itself. Hence the very origin of the soul's existence has its place in the state of humility, the most glorious state of its determination. All honor flows from this state and all power derives from the might that this state imparts. There is no other glory for the soul than the affinity to and the affiliation with God, and there is no ground for faith, devotion and gratitude except the religious ground of humility. The destiny of participation in Divine Life is of the most real importance, and humility is the sole course of its fulfillment. Humility is the answer, the reflex and the resounding of Divine Glory in the soul.

Fortitude is the virtuous power of the course of giving, for its superessential origin is Perfection, the perfect might of giving. From this holy source flows fortitude into the humble soul, that it may become strong and mighty. The child of God is a great spirit. It must possess great will, intellect and sentiment, as the actuating power for sanctification, which incessantly urges to spiritual greatness. God uplifts and expands the virtuous soul in order that it may adequately represent God's Own Image, and that it may cooperate in uplifting and expanding other souls. God delights in the cooperation of His heavenly children with His

Perfection and, correspondingly, virtuous souls delight in the cooperation with His holy might.

No efforts are spared to reach this great goal on the part of the virtuous soul. He knows and he feels that without fortitude, invincible power is impossible. Thus each attempt for virtue begins with the purification of the heart. Then, with increased and concentrated efforts of the will and intellect, virtues are attained and one by one stored in the heart until it is filled with them. This is the school of fortitude, in which the mastery of power is attained. Power consists intrinsically in the power of giving, and the greatest giving powers are virtues. God gives them, that the soul may give them again and again to other souls, and rejoice with them in the transcendent gifts of God.

Beatitude is the rejoicing in transcendent gifts. No matter how much the soul may obtain of all the external riches, none satisfies the inward longing except the gift of giving; for in the act of giving, the soul not only proves its great dignity and power but also rejoices in this proof. This proof is its highest fruition, which never abates.

A gift, and particularly a spiritual gift, stands of its own greatness; it lifts itself above all the rubbish of passions and is the sole consolation of the inwardly weak and harrassed. If but once I have accomplished a distinguished, unselfish deed, which means that I

have given truly and unreservedly, that *once* has a tremendous power of consolation and resuscitation of the latent forces of giving. The taste of heaven is precisely a taste of this power. Once truly tasted, it makes the soul hungry for it, and, at the same time, proves the emptiness of life without the power of giving.

Heaven is essentially a life of giving, and only consequently everlasting, for gifts can never be eliminated; their power is immortal. Who has forgotten the sacrifices of our great prophets and teachers? Perhaps only the debased. We all live on their highest aspirations, on their profoundest thoughts and sentiments, and on their sufferings. Our whole rise and spiritual culture is the effect of the immortal gifts of their lives. They passed from this earth, and followers upon followers have passed and are still passing, but their great gifts have never passed. On the contrary, their potency becomes greater and greater.

The life of the highest souls is a life of incessant giving. This constitutes their greatest honor and joy. Among them, too, is a competition; not a competition of taking but of giving. There the taking is a necessity, and the giving the exertion of the utmost freedom of a sanctified heart; precisely the opposite from our low life on this earth. This holy performance constitutes their angelhood, the true reflex of the beatifying eternity of God. No one will ever reach the virtue of beatitude until he understands this fact and until

he embraces the giving and beatifying might with his whole heart.

The light of God is the most shining gift in the whole creation. Its permeating transparenence is animating and appalling. It animates the virtuous to the highest visions, and it appals and frightens the sinner through its exposure of his evil conscience. There is no recess of darkness into which it does not send its illuminating might.

Thus the adherence to Divine Light is the necessary virtue of the intellect. True understanding is impossible without this virtue, as we plainly see in the stranding of so many human theories on abstract and, consequently, incomprehensible substances, and on the still less comprehensible atoms and electrons. These little things do not shine with universal splendor, nor do they reveal to us the path to honor, truth and love, the real path to a worthy character. Thus we see how adventurous and dangerous becomes our mind when the gift of Divine Light is not heeded.

It is God's absolute definition that the virtuous soul strives for, not his own personal and subjective views. His admiration for truth is surpassed only by most inward gratitude, for he is conscious that it is not enough to avail oneself of and to delight in the Light of God, but he must press truth into the very inwardness of his heart, and live, suffer and die for it. The gift of Divine Light demands the whole-souled affirma-

tion of this heavenly light, and the one who does not affirm it is not worthy of it. Great souls live in the Light of God. It is their constant animation and wonder, always holding their minds in an enrapturing harmony of visions. This gift is the secret of logical power, which in higher spheres grows to a magnitude incomprehensible to the mind of man.

The virtue of wisdom is a gift of Divine Omniscience. The self-consciousness of the soul is not left to itself. Having truth as its supreme object of vision, it receives the formal support of God through the virtue of wisdom, the holy rule by which truth is attained. Truth cannot be attained without wisdom, and while wisdom pertains mainly to self-consciousness, it involves the will and sentiment as well. Unless there is a will for truth—not a mere intention, but a strong determination—there is no possibility of possessing wisdom. And where sentiment for truth is lagging the will has no power. The gifts of God must be desired with the whole soul in order to be effective, for no gift can be effective that is forced into the soul.

Consequently, each soul receives only such volume of virtuous gifts as it desires and is predisposed and prepared to hold, which means to adore, to esteem, to conceive and to love. If virtues are not considered as gifts of God, they can neither be adored nor rightly understood, much less can they be intensely loved.

The gift of virtues is the supreme object of love; it

is the love of God Himself, by virtue of which the most tangible and intimate revelation of His Holiness, Truth and Love is effected. Only the anthropomorphically perverted mind cannot see this patent religious fact. Wisdom is the divine light for personal guidance, and all errors result from the lack of this virtue. Without wisdom, no theory of life can be rightly conceived and no right practice of life accomplished.

The virtue of simplicity is a holy gift of Divine Omnipresence. Wherever we turn our eyes, whether within or without ourselves, we see the effects of the creative and operative might of God. This vision is so simple and so effective that each soul is impressed with the intimation that everything in existence is the work of God; not a work in time or space or within a beginning and an end, but an absolutely unlimited, unceasing and everlasting work, which sustains our being in all spiritual and natural conditions of life. This divine work is the most obvious gift and the living Providence of God.

Nothing is simpler than the fact that our free will is for worthiness, that our intellect is for truth and that our heart is for love. The whole external world expresses the simplicity of service. Suns, planets and our own earth, with its light, atmosphere, vegetation and countless materials of utility; all these are there to be taken as if from God's hand. Even souls are there to be taken into the loving heart, and, above all, is

the holiest gift of conscience through which virtues flow into the worthy heart from the love of God. Are these not gifts? Have we made all this? How utterly senseless must be the soul that does not see these plain facts!

As regards virtuous practice, simplicity is the most evident mode of giving; it gives sincerely, truthfully and modestly, as it behooves that it should give in the holy presence of God, because this is the heavenly manner of giving.

Sacrifice is the essence of giving, and the very sense and consequence of virtuous life. It is the transcendent aim of Divine life and the holy source of great motives and sentiments. Nothing glorifies but sacrifice and, consequently, nothing causes such admiration and uplift and moves the heart so deeply as sacrifice.

Sacrifice is the effecting form of holiness and truth. It always gives the highest and the best and never decreases but always increases its might by giving. Its gifts have eternal worth, and it is this eternal worth of sacrifice which forms and constitutes the noblest character.

Sacrifice is free giving, which knows no compulsion. Superessentially, it issues from the intimacy of Divine Love, and essentially it issues from the soul's heart, the immortal vessel of most glorious sentiments. If anyone wants a tangible proof of immortality, let him accomplish a distinguished sacrifice, and he will ask for no

further proof. All gifts emanate from this virtue, and were it possible to eliminate the greater and lesser sacrifices from our little life, this earth would become miserable, hopeless and unendurable.

Righteousness is the holder and defender of everything that pertains to sacrificial gifts. From the highest sacrificial attainment to the least significant gift, righteousness guards the rightfulness of possession, and be it to a great spirit or the poorest sinner, righteousness is equally faithful. Nothing that rightfully belongs to the soul can be taken away without the insisting reproach of injustice and the absolute demand for reparation.

But why is righteousness so insisting in its reproach and demand? Is it merely on account of the title of legal possession, which often cannot be proved? Has legal possession no ground in conscience? Righteousness is so solicitous about all possessions of the soul, because they are real gifts of God, and real gifts of God must be righteously acquired. Consequently, no possession is a righteous possession unless it is righteously acquired. This fact of conscience evokes the denunciation of all assumed honor and of all social impositions.

If we desire to know the might of righteousness, let us find and look at the possessors of great virtues. Everything they have is righteously obtained. And it is this profound righteousness which makes them so

virtuous that no wickedness can rob them of their highly deserved honor and of the inward joy of their invincibility.

In the light of divine gifts, the final expression of all the gifts of God is goodness, the heavenly manner in which all gifts are manifested. No one gives out of sheer wilfulness, thoughtlessness or hardness of heart. The imparting of gifts is elicited from calm decisions, benevolent thoughtfulness and inward tenderness and compassion, which constitute the spiritual beauty and the heavenly adornment of the heart. How much better in the sight of God is the poor sister of mercy who devotes her life to this beautiful virtue and how superior is the calm and unpretentious spiritual teacher to so many worldly leaders with all their pride and ostentation!

Goodness is the most attractive invitation and the most obvious revelation of the giving spirit of virtues. It precedes every good motive, thought and sentiment and follows each good deed that again it may lead the sentiments of others. And thus it works incessantly as the divine solicitor to a worthy life. In itself it is the easiest virtue to attain, and everybody can have more goodness in his heart if he only wants it.

Thus we see that the life of the soul consists of the gifts of God, the highest of which are virtues. These gifts are the God-given ground and aim of our life, for there is no other destiny than the participation in,

cooperation with and affirmation of the Divine life and, consequently, no other worthy reason for our being.

Christian theologians employ, instead of the term "Divine gift," the far less concrete term "divine grace"; hence the manifest insufficiency and indistinctness of their doctrine. Moreover, the Christian doctrine of grace is not grounded on Divine Attributes as the sole source of "supernatural graces," but is attenuated to their historical tenets. Hence, regardless of good intentions, this doctrine induces human arbitrariness into Divine operation and proves most cogently the disastrous spirit of anthropomorphic dogmas.

VIRTUES, THE ESSENTIAL CULT OF DIVINITY AND SUPREME OBJECT OF PRAYER

What is the intrinsic meaning of the worship of God? Is it only an outer manifestation of religious rites or a recitation of public prayers, as most men seem to understand? Is it possible that the cult of God has no eternal source or plan? Reviewing the divergent religious dogmas, one fails to see an eternal source and order of worship. And yet it is obvious that in the oneness of God there is oneness of will and that the oneness of Divine Will demands consistency and clearness of worship. Each form of worship must issue from its eternal source, the Attributes of God, in order to possess Divine sanction and the power of virtuous elevation and affirmation.

Divine worship is the transcendent form of our life, the form of the whole-souled expression of our allegiance to, adoration of and most inward need of God. It is the form of the origin of all our spiritual forces and of our highest aim, the participation in, cooperation with and affirmation of Divine life. We live for the

sake of the most worshipful, and, consequently, all our forces are concentrated mainly on what we worship.

Worship is not only an expression of sentiment, but a necessity for the will and intellect as well. Why are we so profoundly impressed by the great will that rises above common acts when fulfilling a great sacrifice? Because the purpose of the will is to worship holiness. Why do we admire those high intellects which soar above common thoughts and present a sublimer life than ours? Because the purpose of the intellect is to worship truth. And why do we rejoice in deeds of pure love, if not because they express the worship of love divine?

Holiness, Truth and Love are the supreme forms of worship. They are not mere idealities, as is imagined by anthropomorphic subjectivism, but superessential realities, the formal life of God, and therefore, the life-giving, the life-leading and the life-sanctifying forms of worship. Consequently, the more profoundly the virtues are inrooted in the soul, the purer and sublimer is its worship.

In Holiness we worship the transcendent Majesty of God, His omnipotent Perfection and His super-spiritual Eternity. In Truth we worship His Divine Contemplation and His creative Might, His omniscient Predestination and His omnipresent Providence. In Love we worship God's superessential sacrifice, His

charitable Judgment and His saving and blessing Goodness.

This is the essence of religious worship, and everything that is derived therefrom is worshipful. Therefore, virtues being the emanation of the holy attributes of God, are in themselves worshipful. They issue, live and rise through worship mainly. A soul without virtue can perform no worthy worship, consequently, it will worship its own ego or any subordinated and often unworthy object; its worship is egotistic and not rarely brutal. At best, it only worships incoherent symbols of crude religious traditions, all of which are more or less anthropomorphic and frequently undivine.

Where are the temples reverberating with the Voice of Holiness? Who are the messengers of God whose every word is true? Where are the caretakers of souls, whose main strength is love for fallen mankind? Where there is no true and sublime worship, religion must remain ineffectual. And how is true worship possible if men do not know the intrinsic worthiness of the soul and the sanctity of conscience, the inward God-given form of worship?

The prevailing religious teaching treats the attributes of God as an accessory and not as the most vital religious knowledge. And yet there is no other means of knowing God except through His holiest attributes. Divine attributes are the real revelation of the Holiness,

Truth and Love of God and, consequently, the sole basis of all religious concepts and practice.

Being supremely worshipful in themselves, the might of God are the supreme forms of worship. Consequently, we must know each might of God distinctly and completely before we are able to trust in God. Otherwise, we shall never trust in God, but we shall fear Him and hide ourselves before His holy face, as the great mass of humanity is doing. Everybody knows that religion and even life itself depend on the highest idea and love of God; and everybody is conscious that he cannot worship truly unless he has both the true idea and profound love of God.

Divine attributes are the most distinct revelation of God and, consequently, the most distinct forms of worship. Being eternal in itself, Divine revelation is not a question of time and space, but of the transcendent might which causes the most immortal form of conscience, on which and through which the soul lives immortally. Not in the will, nor in the intellect or sentiment, separately or collectively, do we find the revelation of the attributes of God, but in conscience, the divine form of revelation, and the sole subsistence of the soul's worthiness and life.

Any form of worship which does not follow this Divine order of revelation is either deficient or inconsistent with its holy purpose. Consequently, what should be the fiery focus of virtuous animation, the

flaming light of our thoughts, and the most forceful means of our rise, is, in our present religious education, so inanimate, unenlightening and unelevating that we cannot wonder at the general religious indifference and impotence. Where the grandeurs of God are not held before our faces, and only occasional allusions made to them, the soul must remain worldly and empty of sublimer sensibilities.

Virtues are the religious spirit, the light and the everlasting fruition of Divine attributes and the intrinsic potency of worship. Thus the higher the ascent in virtue, the sublimer is the worship of God. All efforts and means should be employed to promote this state, for the realization of higher worship of God is not only the sole assurance of spiritual progress, but also the sole safety from disaster.

The worship of God is a living prayer. The heart, which is made mainly for prayer, longs to attain and offer its most precious content, its virtues. Thus the soul offers praise to God, because He is the holiest object of highest praise. It protests its faith in God, for God is the absolute ground of infallible faith. It cleaves with constant devotion to God, for God is our heavenly Father, and in final joy it offers unceasing thanks for being His child and a participator in Divine life. This is the heart's answer to the supreme gift of God, its most intimate and most prayerful reciprocity, the might of which is so unconditional that it permeates

all actions, thoughts and sentiments in all our mutual relations. Our best life lives on due praise, on due faith, on due devotion and on due gratitude to God and man. We all long for it and want it in order to live a worthy life and to prove our worthiness.

Having obtained an insight into the giving prayer, let us now consider the essence of the petitionary prayer. What is the object of our most inward solicitude, supplication and entreaty? This object is the riches of heaven, the power of great spirits, the virtues which are the reflected grandeurs of Divinity in great souls.

Virtues are not hidden, exclusive or arbitrary. They are open to every man with no regard to station. They are absolutely true, righteous and beneficent in their profoundness, in their ennobling power and in their practical effectiveness. Each virtue shines with benevolence, for its power is the very beneficence of God. And it is this Divine beneficence which is the supreme object of our earnest solicitude, of our sincere supplication, and our most ardent entreaty. It provides the longing soul with the sublimest means for the worship of God. No possession satisfies except this heavenly means.

Virtues are the supreme object of our petitionary prayer, for without virtues we are impotent for a glorious life. Every sin and error we commit is the consequence of the lack of virtue in our hearts. Thus

we must pray for this divine gift continually, that it be our sustenance and power. For if we do not inwardly long and pray for virtues, our hearts will not be ready to receive and hold them as their greatest treasure.

Virtues are heavenly powers and treasures, and cannot enter a heart that has not prepared itself for them through purification and enlightenment. There must be inward worship in the heart, that virtue may dwell therein. As men clean their bodies and garments to enter into temples, thus our hearts must be pure for the visitation of heavenly guests. And the more serious the solicitude, the sincerer the supplication and the intenser the entreaty, the more permanent becomes the entry of virtues, and the greater is the soul's power and beatitude.

The petitionary prayer is so conspicuous in our life that we cannot move any distance without its insistence. From our earthly birth to our earthly death this prayer is one of the most potent factors of our life. We pray for everything we desire to attain; we ask friends and even strangers for help and we feel grateful commensurately with their assistance. The soul never forgets the need of petition and enjoys the assistance received. Nor does the one who receives thanks forget even the manner of gratitude, which so stirs the heart for the accomplished good. These lesser expressions of life manifest the necessity of petitionary prayer.

Concerning the highest expressions of life we may

ask the following questions: Are we so perfect that we do not need any spiritual assistance? Are we so worthy, so wise and lovable that nothing can be added to our honor, intellect and sentiment? Or are honor, enlightenment and love non-existent? Practically speaking, all the chief issues of life consist in the demand for honor, enlightenment and love. Therefore, if we pray for assistance in our daily affairs and duties, there is infinitely more reason to pray for assistance respecting the immortal issue of our whole being.

The virtuous soul prays for virtues exclusively. He knows no other prayer to God. If Divine providence has placed him in trying conditions, he uses such conditions as providential means for more rapid progress in virtues. He never complains that God has deserted him. On the contrary, regardless of the severity of the external ordeal, his spirit rises higher and higher in praise, faith, devotion and gratitude to God, with ever increasing prayer for still greater devotion and sacrifice to the Holiest of the holiest. This is his true, inward and living cult and prayer.

Holiness, Truth and Love are the immutable forms of true worship. Divine Holiness, through its Perfection and Eternity, urges and evokes in the soul humility, fortitude and beatitude. Divine Truth, through its Omniscience and Omnipresence, reveals divine light and evokes wisdom and simplicity. And Divine Love, through its Charity and Goodness, reveals and demands

sacrifice, righteousness and benevolence. This is the transcendent prototype of our life and, consequently, the sublime and immutable content and order of prayer. It is the prayer of angels and it should be the prayer of our souls. Unless the Face of God shines through the forms of worship, no man is sufficiently attracted to religion and to prayer.

VIRTUES, THE SACRAMENTAL CONTENT OF CONSCIENCE

Virtues, as the eternal spirit, gift and cult of Divine attributes, are manifestly the sanctifying forms of life and, consequently, the sacramental content of conscience. They impart to the soul the spirit and power of participating in, cooperating with and affirming the Divine life. These sanctifying forms are not the superessential prototype of God, but the transcendent might of God; for the superessence of God is God in His intimate Self, while Divine transcendence is only His creative, operative and sanctifying might. In other words, God lives within His holiest superessence, but reveals Himself and operates through His transcendent might. A complete explanation of this distinction between the Divine Superessence and Transcendence will be given in a future work on "The Face of God." A reference to this distinction, however, is here necessary in order to serve as a guard and a warning against pantheistic confusion on this subject.

The insistence in various creeds on the necessity of partaking the sacraments and the justified assertion that sacraments produce tangible religious effects, make it

evident that sacraments are not mere religious signs or means, as is generally asserted, but the essential content and condition of religious life. As in so many important definitions, so also in this instance, the principle is mistaken for the effect.

And now let us observe the disastrous consequences of this confusion. Because each creed claims the exclusive possession of sanctifying means, it attenuates its sacraments by adapting them to tenets based on exclusive traditions and scriptures, and thus causes a basis for religious, or, more correctly, for irreligious conflicts. We notice that among orthodox creeds, where sacraments are the most vital part of religious instruction, this conflict is more conspicuous than among liberal confessions. But we also notice that where sacraments are not the most vital part of a religion, as in the case of liberal churches, religion ceases to be the chief object of the heart, and there follows a laxity of religious practice. This is not simplifying religion; it is reducing it to an ethical law without the living object of this law.

It is well that we recognize the ethical value of religion, and many follow ethics even without the recognition of religion. Ethics pertain mainly to our spiritual sociability and manifest our religious standard and elevation, but they are the effect, not the principle of religion. In other words, they are the logical sequence of it. No moral code forces a soul to sacrifice, but

sacrifice is a sublime example for sublimer ethics. What humanity mainly needs is sublimer ethics and these cannot be attained without profounder religious conviction and the recognition that religion consists of the sacramental content of conscience, the eternal spirit of Divine attributes.

Philosophical demonstrations concerning God, the universe and the soul are necessary and, if well performed, convincing and admirable, but, having only an enlightening power, they do not warm and bind the heart. We see many intelligent, ethical and correctly acting men, but we rarely see the loving heart, the *real* bond between God and man. The spirit of friendship that binds the soul to holy mutuality and proves that we are the true children of God, is seldom there.

If it should be asked which comes first in the logical order, sacraments or religion, we must admit that in order to accept religion we must first know its sacramental features and content, for it is this fact which matters in religion mainly. And what is this sacramental content? It is the Superspirit of God formally revealed in and operating through conscience on our will, intellect and sentiment, in order to embrace and fill them with virtues, the heavenly spirit of Divine attributes. Hence it is not religion in its traditional sense that causes, holds and possesses sacraments, but on the contrary, it is this sacramental spirit of God

which constitutes and effects the very bond of religion, and thus makes it sacramental and sanctifying.

Notwithstanding the erroneous definitions of sacraments, there is an inward compulsion in the soul for something holy; for sacramental animation. It cannot be otherwise. The soul, being the transcendent throb of divine determination, endowed with the flame of divine truth and the vessel of divine love, intimately inclines and cleaves to holiness and to the sacramental manifestations of holiness. No one who hears the name of God can free himself from this holy impression.

When sounding our soul in its deepest recesses we find a disquieting undercurrent of longing. We strive to calm this longing by means of conscientious fulfillment of our common duties and we derive much inward contentment therefrom. Nevertheless, we always feel the need for higher aspiration and the feeling of this need makes us spiritually anxious. What is this disquieting undercurrent in the depth of our soul which every serious man experiences? It is the sanctifying operation of the Divine attributes, which claim the ownership of the heart and insist on their entrance into the soul's vessel. There is no abatement in this sanctifying operation and, consequently, there is no relaxation in the heart until it is filled with the sacramental riches of heaven.

Now let us consider this sanctifying operation more formally, that we see how each force and form of the

soul is involved in this sacramental content. The essential form of the soul consists of will, intellect and sentiment. But this is not its supreme form, because will, intellect and sentiment are essentially relative. The will relates to the supreme object of affirmation, which is holiness, the intellect to the supreme object of truth, and sentiment to the supreme object of love. Therefore, we must understand formally this supreme object before we can understand the formal purport and importance of our own self-conscious and self-sentient volitional soul.

The formal object of the self-conscious and self-sentient will is glory, power and beatitude. The will cannot want anything more and cannot be satisfied with anything less. Self-consciousness must have absolute light, wisdom and simplicity, as the fundamental requisite of its intellect, in order to have an infallible understanding of its own capacity. And self-sentiency cannot feel itself great, powerful, happy and true except in pure love, righteousness and goodness. Without these virtues the whole soul feels itself cursed and doomed.

These are the superspiritual forms of the soul, its sanctifying ground and principle and the proof of the sacredness of conscience. They are the subsisting and sanctifying Superspirit of Divine attributes, dwelling under the soul in each of its forces and forms. Emanating from the Holiness, Truth and Love of

God, each Divine attribute absolutely demands and insists, through conscience, on the performance of all deeds, on the employment of all thoughts, and on the gathering of all sentiments sacredly, that the soul's movement and motive may possess sacramental value.

Sacrament, in its original meaning, is an oath or a vow. It is a fair question to ask what is the highest and sublimest vow of which the soul is capable, if not the vow to lead a virtuous life? All great souls have vowed their lives to God, and God has blessed them with immortal glory.

A vow is a free, intense determination and promise, formally and solemnly expressed before God, with pleadings for His blessing. A vow can be made publicly or privately, and in either case it binds with equal force. The necessity of vows is manifested in all our important relations. The entrance upon great responsibilities, the induction into high office, the obligations of matrimony, and all important resolutions and testimony are sealed with an oath. Thus, for the sake of the security of our social stability, we are bound to avail ourselves of sacramental forms. Intrinsically, each covenant and serious promise is an informal vow.

Why is it that we so rarely apply vows in our religious duties? Why do we not vow benevolence for the sake of those who are in great spiritual and physical need? Why do we not vow righteousness, so absolutely necessary to keep our consciences clean from

injustice, and to sustain and nourish our inward sense of honor? Why do we not vow to perform a little sacrifice once a week or even once a month, that we may gather the power of sacrificial motives? Why do we not vow to be sincere and truthful in all our expressions, in order to protect ourselves and others against the curse of falsehood? Why do we not vow our minds to wisdom and Divine light, that we be freed from the oppressing ignorance of the sublime might of religion? Why do we not vow our faith, devotion and gratitude to God, as we should, at every moment we think of His holy name? And why do we not vow all our energies to sanctification, that we be eternally crowned with the beatitude of heavenly association? Because we have not as yet realized the full significance of virtues as the intrinsic sacramental content of conscience and religion.

What causes virtues to be so intrinsically sacramental? Because they are the living imitation of the holiest attributes of God. In God the might of each attribute is so absolutely, formally and intensely holy that the corresponding answer from the soul cannot adequately express itself except through the most solemn sacramental vow, to imitate and follow the mights of God. This is the religious idea of the sacramental principle, which at all times and under all circumstances should be the guiding light in our worship and in all our religious performances.

Until religious leaders understand this religious factor clearly and accept it in practice, humanity will not realize the necessity for inward discipline and, consequently, will never be able to emerge from the prevailing spirit of heathenism.

The esthetical part of sacramental performance in public worship is of secondary significance, but there is all reason to demand that in solemnity and beauty it shall greatly surpass anything that has so far been achieved by religious art.

Owing to its predominantly selfish pursuits, humanity has but very little sacramental sense. And such unenlightened sense as it has, leads it to external and mysterious forms in order at least partly to satisfy its longing for sacraments. Even many of those who profess not to believe in God, or who, in their pantheistic proclivities, utterly undivinize or humanize Divinity, nevertheless readily accept and cling to external rites of official sacramentalism.

In each public or private oath or solemn covenant the sacramental importance manifests itself, but if the soul does not descend into the profoundness of its sacramental conscience, and if it does not explore its holy ground, power and elevation, it will remain blind and insensitive to the most essential importance of its life. It will not be able to adore the most adorable or respect the most worthy; it will not be able to attain clear and lofty visions and fill its heart with power and delight everlasting.

VIRTUES, THE ETERNAL ESSENCE, REVELATION AND BOND OF RELIGION

From the beginning of religious researches, much has been written on the subject of the essence of religion. In these works we observe the effort to bring religion within the scope of our theoretical understanding, in order to enhance the religious cause and stimulate our interest in this supreme science.

Dogmatic theologies are based on prophecies and traditions, formulated into corresponding cults. A religious cult, including a religious form of discipline, is based on this religious content, irrespective of how outwardly or indistinctly the forms of this religious content are expressed, and with little regard for the rational consistency of religious knowledge with the general complex of life. To remedy the lack of rational clearness in religious principles and to effect a more rational religious practice is the ultimate aim of religious philosophy.

Established theologies and religious philosophy are working essentially for the same end. In both it matters about the faith in God, the immortality of the soul and the future rewards and punishments. Established

theologies are called "positive religion" for the sole reason that they contain a religious cult and discipline. Not having any established cult, religious philosophy is called "speculative." But we must bear in mind that all established dogmas passed through centuries of "speculation" before they attained their present form. Indeed, we plainly see in the voluminous histories of dogmas that dogmas are never at a standstill.

Prophets have never given us the complete religious science or revelation. They have given us only simple, however important, fragments of religion. If we compare their statements with the writings of mystics like Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Eckhart or Ruysbroek, we shall find that the latter surpassed all the prophets in elevation and volume of religious ideas and sentiments. And yet those great mystics were addicted to religious speculation. Speculation has been the working power of their spiritual elevation and greatness. It is far easier to rest on the pillars of historical dogmas and to repeat what others have said with respect to God, the soul and our future life, than to awaken the soul to its inwardness through the progressive and profounder religious experience and higher thoughtfulness of the spiritual teacher.

All dogmas are reducible to one simple statement, God, the soul and the soul's relation to God. Beyond this, there is nothing really dogmatic. All other teachings are circumstantial theological opinions with endless

and contradictory interpretations. Historical events, no matter how true, are neither the ground nor even a proof of religion, but a mere illustration of religious aspirations and mental and sentimental habits.

The teachers of orthodoxy will give us a better proof of religious zeal and wisdom, if, instead of denouncing, they will encourage the search for the essence of religion and not dwell on the mere surface of it. Then they will become more consistent in their occasional allusions to the inwardness of the *divine* in our souls. The doctrine of revelation which holds that God has revealed Himself only once in many centuries, in a single place and to a few men, and, inferentially, that He does not reveal Himself continually, in His own creative achievement and sacrifice, which is the soul, is, to say the least, superficial and childish. In consequence of such teaching, humanity must suffer from the want of religion, and historical dogmas must become less and less interesting to good, serious and thoughtful men.

The essence of religion is the most essential factor of our life. It is God's holy Will in the soul, a Will which constitutes the dominion of the soul's honor, truth and beatitude, and which causes the sole, incontestable revelation of God in us. Whichever view we follow, whether the mystical "intuition," the philosophical "idea" or "causality," the religious "feeling of dependency," the ethical compulsion, or traditional teachings,

they all pertain to the essence of religion, the revelation of God.

What is the reason for such divergence of views relative to the essence of religion? Why does the mystic depend on intuition, a sort of mind-sentiment? For what reason do philosophers employ predominantly ideas and logic? Why do so many theologians rely on the feeling of dependence and duty? And why do historical creeds cleave so tenaciously to prophetic tradition? There is only one answer to all of these questions, namely, that all these views are due to the lack of understanding of the soul. The soul, being the greatest act of God's creation, must, for this very reason, be the most important form of Divine revelation; or, to speak with Eckhart, "the one who understands the essence of the soul, understands God."

The obvious form of revelation is conscience. All religious views recur to conscience for their final approval. One can with no more justification accept a conviction contradictory to conscience than commit a deed against conscience. Furthermore, God suffers nothing to precede His Will. It is and must be first; for nothing is as near to the soul as God; His Will is ever present in conscience, and thus is His Light and His Love. No matter how forgetful and ungrateful the poor soul is for the privilege of living on and delighting in the effects of conscience, God never wholly forsakes His creature and never allows its total aliena-

tion from conscience. No matter how much man may strive not to be aware of conscience, he finally must submit to it.

Conscience, in its fundamental conception, is the formal Will of God and the eternal subsistence of our psychic forces and forms, and, consequently, of our worthiness and destiny. The formal Will of God, as explained in the preceding chapters, flows from His Holiest attributes and constitutes the *essence, revelation and bond of religion*. Now we understand the efforts of mystics, prophets, theologians, philosophers and moralists. Each of them has worked and thought according to his inward experience, real and ideal, in order to find and explain this divine revelation and divine bond. Incomplete and insufficient as the results of their efforts have been, they have contributed the most essential means of our soul's education and progress. These men gave the best they had attained, and humanity owes them more gratitude than criticism.

The bond of the soul with God is evident. Conscience formally demands worthiness, fortitude and beatitude. The soul has the spiritual equipment of will and freedom of motive for this holy demand. Furthermore, conscience demands the following of the divine light, wisdom and simplicity, for the soul has the innate means of perception, conception and the complex of ideas of truth and veracity. Finally, conscience demands pure love, righteousness and goodness, for the

soul has the ability to attain and keep these holy expressions of life.

The intrinsic demand of Divine revelation and the bond of religion is virtue. Where there is no virtue, there is neither revelation of God nor a real bond with God. Our human order and all our good relations are based on virtue; and all good enactments and moral precepts are only the consequence of the urgency of virtues. Virtues are what we essentially live on and for. Therefore, even effectually, virtues are the essence, revelation and bond of religion.

Without the ground of virtues, religion has no intrinsic importance and, at its best, is only an expression of religious aspirations. Where the knowledge of the supreme purpose of divine revelation is so sinfully neglected, the impotence of religious teachings and the frequent undivine admixture in such teachings, is unavoidable. The consequences of this neglect and ignorance are manifest in our daily life. Churches are not the main attraction and preachers not often the most esteemed and beloved men.

Where the revelation of God is not ever-present in the soul, the bond of the soul with God is very loose and distant. All the soul wants to know of religion is this inward bond. The rest follows of itself. If our religious teachers will explain this religious bond to mankind, the most important part of their mission will be fulfilled, for no greater service can be rendered to

man than the clear explanation of conscience. Without this leading explanation, appeals, encouragement and exhortations will seldom pierce the anthropomorphic wall which shuts us off from the vision of God and of our own soul.

VIRTUES, THE ABSOLUTE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE SANCTIFYING AND BEATIFYING LAWS OF LIFE

Were it not for Divine Perfection, as the commanding necessity, the soul would not be a subject but an object in life, in which case the ultimate destruction of our life would follow; for what is not perfect cannot exist by its own force. Divine attributes express the Perfection of the Holiness of God and, being the expressions of Absolute Life, possess in themselves the commanding might which is the absolute spirit and essence of law.

The soul essentially relates to the Divine attributes, also called Divine perfections, mights or grandeurs, which, being absolute in themselves, are the holiest commandments and laws of the soul. The soul, being intrinsically a relative being, wants, searches and longs for perfect commandments in order to be animated, supported and guided by them; it wants absolute law and rule for its determinations, judgments and desires.

The chief difficulty and uneasiness that man experiences in his daily life is the lack of knowledge of

Divine commandments, the highest and safest laws of conduct. Hence his many arbitrary desires, inconsistent thoughts and disordered sentiments. "What shall I do?" This is the ever-recurring question. This "shall" is not an incidental obligation, but the pressure of an ever-commanding law which is the mainstay of spiritual harmony, of our best endeavors, and of all good conduct.

The spirit of Divine commandments insists on making us virtuous. It is not an object of mere religious aspiration and ideals, but the concrete Divine law of our duties. Through this commanding form, the essence, revelation and bond of religion manifests the utmost reality, concreteness and effectualness of holy life.

The aim of religion is sanctification and beatification. Sanctification, with its concomitant beatification, constitutes the highest state of lawfulness. This lawfulness must have a holy and formal ground in order to sustain its holy might. The Divine attributes constitute this formal ground. Sanctification is the lawful might of each attribute on the part of God and the lawful course of the adhering forces on the part of the soul. The formal effect of this lawful course are virtues, the imitation of Divine attributes. Consequently, virtues are not only the ideally corresponding powers of the soul, but also the real concomitant powers with the mights of God.

The soul must follow God on the path of His holiest

mights in order to attain sanctification and beatification, for this is the absolute reason of our existence. With a voice absolutely commanding, each Divine attribute calls, urges and reveals this necessity in conscience; and therefore, each Divine attribute is a particular commandment of virtue. Essentially, there are no negative commandments, for commandments and laws are absolutely positive. The "Thou shalt not" does not sanctify and beatify, but only endeavors to prevent sin.

The soul wants to know most positively what it *should* and not what it *should not* do. Unfortunately, the commandments of God are not sufficiently known and recognized, because no intense effort has been made to understand conscience, the sole divine form through which God reveals His holy Will.

The one who has a sublime conscience knows the Will of God positively; and knowing His Will, he is conscious of the eternal might of Divine Holiness, Truth and Love, and with his whole soul he accepts them and submits to them as the profoundest ground and law of his life. The one who has no living conscience, cannot positively know the Will of God and, therefore, employs conscience for his more or less selfish aims, and is uncertain as to his future life. And the one who disregards conscience, treads on the brink of criminality into which he so often falls.

The commandments of God must be made clear to

humanity and must embrace the total complex of our spiritual life. Each commandment must call for a distinct virtue, the power of which profoundly affects every soul's movement. By these commandments the will should be urged, the intellect enlightened and the heart inflamed and warmed.

Divine commandments are the sublime objects of worship, prayer, sermons and of our best aspirations and endeavors; they are the eternal law of the love of God and man. Their absence debases our life and causes unceasing strife and misery.

The spirit of Divine commandments is not a mere spirit of authority, but essentially the spirit of Holiness, of Truth and of Love, and it is this absolutely holy might which causes them to be absolutely authoritative. The slightest disobedience to Divine commandments manifests pride and lack of virtue.

A synopsis of virtues in a simple form of commandments is given in the "Religious Decalog" of the work, "The Religion of the Soul."

VIRTUES, THE SUPREME HONOR, POWER AND DUTY OF MAN

Honor, power and duty are the most expressive and important factors of our life. Thereof consists the whole value of the character of man.

Honor is the power which matters mainly in our life. It is the principal object of our endeavors, of our solicitude and of our sentiment. We feel glad and happy in performing an honorable act and we feel perturbed and wretched in performing a dishonorable act; because in the first instance we have the full approval of conscience and in the other instance we feel its reproach and condemnation. Man will endure all sorts of reproaches concerning his lack of ability, mental deficiency, negligence, etc., but he will not endure a reproach to his honor unless the facts which cause the reproach are irrefutable. Even then he will usually endeavor to mitigate the accusation by extenuating his inward guilt. No volition, no thought and no sense is as keen as that of personal honor, and in all our human relations no subject is so delicately approached as is the honor of man.

Furthermore, pursuing the factor of honor in its

effectiveness and influence, we do not find that it relates to any one particular force of the soul, but that it dominates the entire self-conscious and self-sentient will. All faculties of the soul and, consequently, all movements of its forces are affected by honor. Thus honor is not an outward or additional factor, but the most inward, most real and most important factor of our life. It is so important that every serious man holds honor as his dearest treasure and most guarded secret.

We converse about all possible things, about our purposes, ideas and our very heart, but we very rarely, if ever, speak of the inwardness and importance of our honor. Shall we call this fact a deficiency of our character? Perhaps we may. But there is another aspect of this question. There is something more important to the factor of honor than to any other factor, and our deep-felt deficiency proves this importance. It is the sacredness of the honor of divine childship which causes it to be the soul's dearest treasure and secret. A man who has no clear consciousness of this fact, invariably has a subconsciousness of honor, and, though he may try his utmost, no man can destroy this consciousness or subconsciousness. One may impair and debase it, but one cannot eliminate this inward sense.

In this fact we see the absolute hold of conscience on the soul, a sacred hold which is the cause of the inward secret. To prove the sacredness of this inward secret, it is enough to observe a truly honorable man,

who not only is strictly righteous and profoundly benevolent, but is always modest and unpretentious. If, on the other hand, we observe the more or less visible vanity of arrogated honor, the lack of respect for virtues is obvious.

The possessor of true honor never places his dignity at the footlights of his conduct; he carries it in his heart. On the other hand, the one who has but little honor in his inwardness, but is subconscious that he should have more of it, commits the dishonorable act of deceiving himself by false dignity in order to deceive others by fictitious appearances of dignified adornment.

It matters little to the virtuous man whether his honor is recognized by man or not, but it is of greatest concern to him whether he has due honor before the Face of God, whether he carries the sublime honor of his divine childship with due inward dignity.

No soul can give dignity to itself, but it can work for it. This work is the most important work of our life, for its conditions are Holiness, Truth and Love, in which the soul must participate in order to live a worthy life.

Worthiness, therefore, is not an ideal, but a concrete reality of our life, the very focus of all our endeavors, thoughts and sentiments. No honorable man will tolerate unworthy acts without protest, much less will he tolerate them in himself. The most intense combat is the combat of our inward sense of divine childship with

the aggressions of dishonorable passions. If our determination and sense of honor is high we win and rise; if not, we lose and retrograde.

Because it is the formal expression of humility to the holy Will of God, honor has a strictly religious meaning. Eliminate humility and there remains no substance for personal honor. Wanton self-will is then the only alternative. The one who does not understand that honor is the first law of God and the actual realization of humility, will never understand the supreme dignity and might of religion. The striking indifference to religious values, as well as the lack of due reverence for religion in general, is attributable to the deficiency of religious teaching and its failure to impress upon us the urgent necessity for the *religious honor of the soul*.

Hindu and Christian ascetics have been swayed too much by pessimism. Though it cannot be denied that our spiritual position is wretched, this pessimism must not be applied to the essence of our soul, the sublimest gift of God. We must hate each evil deed we commit, but we must not hate our soul in its creational subsistence and substance, for this would be almost the equivalent of blasphemy. It is this radical pessimistic sentiment which accounts for theories of a dual factor in the soul, the good and the evil, and of dual or even threefold hypostatic divinities, one counteracting or else supplementing the other. Where the commandment of worthiness is not clearly understood, the soul, in its

depression and darkness, is only too apt to cleave to its own shadows.

Humility and honor are the highest *power* of man's character. The deeper humility and honor are inrooted into the self-conscious and self-sentient will, the more powerful becomes our determination. The "will to power" finds in the *will to humility and honor* its profoundest basis and highest efficacy.

Everyone must bow in supreme admiration before the Holiness, Truth and Love of God and, for the same reason, one feels compelled to admire and esteem the relative bearer of these Divine mights. The one who by a truthful testimony braves false statements, the destitute one who is still able and willing to divide the remnants of his bread with the hungry, or, the one who prays amidst the scoffers and blasphemers, are lesser examples of the power of a worthy character. Much greater is the power of those who are determined to purify their characters from pride, vanity, envy, greed and lust; to make themselves impermeable to corruption, in order to be capable of greater spiritual service to humanity. But the greatest power of character consists in the faithful and indomitable following of God's Will for the sake of God's eternal glory and our everlasting honor.

The full development of our spiritual power consists in the following of the Voice of God. Each Divine attribute is an incessant urging of the soul's will, a

beacon of light in our surrounding darkness and the most affectionate call and invitation to the eternal participation in Divine life. Here lies the great source of all power. Nothing can deter or sway the virtuous soul from the path of the Divine Will, nothing can darken the lucidity of his clear vision, and no love can enter his heart that is not pure and holy.

Only these or similar souls God chooses as heralds of the majesty of His Holiness, Truth and Love. Compared to their sacred power and humble attitude, the glittering crowns of men are like human toys which sooner or later are ground into dust. One serious reflection or sentence, or one single appeal to conscience is often sufficient to direct the soul on a higher course of life. No loud assumption and no esthetical surface is required to persuade another soul to follow the Voice of God. A sincere, simple and quiet act or statement is all-sufficient.

The majesty of Divine might embraces those who long and work for virtuous power. Humility is glorious and powerful, for it proves the supreme honor of the soul. Glory demands power for its movement, the very fortitude of its gloriousness, that it may act and live in blissfulness, the eternal state of everything virtuous. Divine light is the sun of glory, wisdom its holy torch, and simplicity the truthfulness of virtuous power. Sacrificial love is the realization of the glorious power of life, righteousness its most faithful guardian,

and goodness the unceasing attraction and the never fading beauty of spiritual power. These are the everlasting powers of the profoundly religious character.

All the inward longing of the heart is the longing for these powers, and all illusions of life result from the lack of virtues. The soul wants power, and always more power, in order to be able to prove itself worthy and always more worthy. This inward longing is so great that for want of virtuous power man will often grasp unvirtuous power in order to assert at least the mere capacity for power. Human experience proves, however, that all power attained in violation of conscience is temporary, precarious and ends in disaster. The "human invincible" is a sham.

The history of humanity furnishes the record of human power; and the results of this power are our present religious, political and social conditions. We observe how very slow is the progress which has been made through the ages. The masses are still living in ignorance and in the bondage of low passions, and, of those who are above the masses, but very few have the virtuous spirit. How then is it possible that humanity can rise to a greater and happier life? If the glory and power of divine childship is not taught openly in our temples and educational institutions, and if the honor and grandeur of virtues is not held before our eyes, no soul can attain the spiritual strength of which we are all so much in need.

The commandment or law of duty is full of the utmost significance. It demands and insists on our participation in Divine life, which is the transcendent and most real subsistence of our honor and power. The reason we understand so little of this great fact, and have but a distant feeling of it, is because we neither heed nor clearly know the Will of God, a condition which causes our religious misery. How is it possible to have a palpable interest in religion, if God is not our clearest vision, but a mystery! If this assertion be true, then the Will of God is also a mystery and, consequently, there cannot exist a clear and logical ground of religion. This is precisely the situation in which humanity finds itself. We subconsciously acknowledge duties, because we feel their insistent importance, but we do not see clearly the real ground of duties; we do not see virtues as the eternal spirit of Divine attributes and as the transcendent revelation of the holy Will of God, which is the real object of duty.

It is true that we are very far from those heavenly spheres where virtues are the palpitation of the heart of sanctified souls, but unless the necessity of virtues is clearly explained to us, and is brought closer to our mind and heart, we shall never have a palpable interest in our highest calling and shall only seek, as we so often do, for false consolation in the consciousness of our spiritual impotence.

Duty is no little thing, to be dismissed by superficial

reflections or feeling. It is the great binding power of all our relations. Each movement of our life is filled with duties and a thorough performance of duties denotes keen sense of honor and power of character. Consequently, duty is the necessity to fulfill what is worthy. And what is the worthiest duty to be fulfilled? It is the fulfillment of virtues, the great focus of honor and power, the religious ground of the worthy character and the inviolable rule of worthy conduct. If we allow ourselves to imagine the total absence of every virtue in a soul, we are struck by irrepressible repugnance.

Duty, being the most expressive insistence in our life, belongs first to Holiness, Truth and Love of God, as the most commanding might of all life. No duty has its right expression without the will for holy deeds, the self-consciousness of truth and self-sentiency of love. No matter how little the duty may be, the self-conscious and self-sentient volition of a holy, true and beneficent might is there. Without this might there is no sense of duty. And the greater the sense of this holy bond, the greater is the ease with which great duties are performed.

The education of character consists mainly in the thorough understanding and habitual performance of duties. Whenever there is a relaxation or neglect in this performance, the character becomes weaker, and, on the contrary, if one undertakes to perform an

extraordinarily great duty, his character, in and after its fulfillment, gains extraordinary power.

How is it possible for humanity to rise to a worthier life, when there are so few who have a profound interest in virtue? How is it possible to have this great interest, if the grandeur and the duty of virtue are not explained and propounded as the prime condition of our religious and social education? We hear the repetition of great words, beautifully phrased, but seldom, if ever, is the consistency of virtuous power with our highest aim of life made clear. So long as it is not made clear to every man that the will, the mind and the heart have but one supreme aim and duty, the duty of being permeated with virtues in order to possess a great and clear conscience, humanity will remain surrounded by the same dangers of self-seeking, ignorance, envy and hatred which sooner or later must result in another and perhaps greater calamity.

Never before in human history has there been a more auspicious time for serious men to realize the need for a greater and profounder religion, which, by its power over all human tendencies, will urge us to a more honorable life, open a vastly greater scope for our vision, and lead us to the noblest achievements in all our relations to God and our fellow-beings. The magnitude of this task requires the highest efforts of our motives, of ceaseless, earnest thinking, and of free unselfish sentiments. Will the stronger men see this

urgent need and devote their lives to this spiritual betterment? Or, will they merely be satisfied with a temporary, material betterment? Assuredly, the pressing duty of material betterment is considerable, but far more important is the duty of greater spiritual understanding and harmony, the actual ground of the common blessings of life.

VIRTUES OF THE WILL

The essence of the soul consists in self-conscious and self-sentient will, self-consciousness being the process and self-sentiency the effect of its life.

Since the soul has a strictly religious aim, each of its forces possesses a particular religious object with which it must correspond.

Virtues are the superspiritual reflex of Divine attributes and, as such, correspond with Divine attributes. The soul, being the spiritual force for the imitation of Divine attributes, inherently possesses correspondingly spiritual formality in order to fulfill this superspiritual task and aim.

Thus the order of virtues is not only psychological but also, and mainly, superspiritual; it is the dominating superspiritual order and aim of the soul.

The religious will defines itself through *humility*, *fortitude* and *blissfulness*, because humility constitutes its inward standpoint toward God, fortitude the energy to uphold this divine standpoint, and blissfulness the state and joy which are the fruitful effect of this holy standpoint.

THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

Owing to its sentimental profoundness and effectiveness, humility is usually considered to be rather a virtue of the heart; hence its sentimental illustrations by religious teachers. Yet, notwithstanding its sentimental profoundness and effectiveness, humility is essentially a virtue of the will and the ground of all other virtues.

At this point it may be necessary to observe that we must beware of the pessimistic idea of humility which takes the standpoint of human abjectness or "non-being." Such ideas of humility do not correspond with the holiest motive of Divine Creation and of Divine Love. Though the term "humility" may not be exact, it, nevertheless, conveys sufficiently the meaning of our attitude to God, which is its fundamental importance.

The consciousness and sentiment that the soul is not a mere accidental or mechanical something, but a self-conscious and self-sentient spiritual will, derived from the almighty outflow of Divine Holiness, Truth and Love, a truth that every religious man ought to know clearly and feel most inwardly, lifts the soul to the sublime and just consideration of the fact that it is a child of God. This consideration is consistent with

Divine Holiness, and is proved by the Divine hold on the soul through conscience.

Humility is primarily unreserved submission to the holiest Will of God as our eternal Creator, Lord and Father and, therefore, the absolute prototype of our relative life.

The holy source from which the virtue of humility arises is affinity to, affiliation with, and imitation of God, thus expressing most distinctly our sacred right and our sacred duty of participating in, cooperating with and affirming His holiest Will.

This participating affinity, cooperating affiliation and affirming imitation is the supreme reason and purpose of our existence on which Divine creativeness, Divine dominion and Divine fatherhood is concentrated.

The concentration of Divine creativeness, dominion and fatherhood on the soul is superessentially sacrificial, a free Divine act for the sake of sanctifying and beatifying a relative being in the life of God.

A higher gift of life is inconceivable and impossible. It imparts worship of the Life of God and, by virtue of this worship, the worthiness and honor of our life; for in the worship of God consists the highest honor of man.

Without holiness as the absolute source and object of life neither worship nor honor is possible. And without worship and honor life itself would be aimless

and worthless; it would have no superspiritual subsistence which alone imparts supreme reality to life.

We do not create worship and dignity, we only participate in it. Worship and dignity are not subordinated to our psychic forces, they are superordinated as their ground and aim. All our efforts are concentrated in order to sustain and cultivate worship and dignity in our inwardness, for the sake of our exaltation and fear of our debasement.

The will of the soul is created for Divine worship, its intellect for Divine truth and its heart for Divine love. Any other pretended reason for our existence is baseless and absurd. No life is worth living unless worship and dignity are its ground and aim.

Accordingly, all our determinations and visions must realize sacrificial power in order to prove the worthiness of our affinity to, affiliation with and imitation of God's life.

We see that humility consists primarily in the absolute dependence from and submission to God. This dependence and submission constitutes the most glorious, logical and concrete dependence of our life. All that we are seeking in our motives, thoughts and sentiments is absolute dependence, without which our endeavors would be futile. The consciousness and feeling of this dependence permeates all our spiritual forces and we are unable to make one step without it. Each individual life is pursued according to and builded on the

dependence from the absoluteness of Holiness, Truth and Love, the insisting and obvious attributes of God.

Whenever we depend on the promise of man we do so only on the ground that he, too, depends on and from the absolute might of God. Take away the affinity to, affiliation with and imitation of God from the soul and there remains nothing to depend upon; all its spiritual forces lack the necessary sacredness. If they are not consistent with the absolute prototype of Holiness, Truth and Love, they cannot be otherwise than arbitrary, independable and untrue.

Humility, as the standpoint of unreserved submission to God, constitutes the state of highest exaltation and freedom in the Life of God. Only the evil spirit of haughtiness, with its anthropomorphically perverted mentality, or the morbid depression of debased souls, dares to impute tyrannical motives to God.

What is more glorious than the soul's affinity to God? What is more exalting than our affiliation with God? And what is more ennobling and beatifying than the imitation of Divine Life?

If religious confessions do not bring this cardinal religious fact into the foreground of religious teachings, they will fail in their main mission, and humanity will remain in the same confusion of mind and selfishness of heart which are today its most conspicuous features. If humility does not appeal to the human heart and

if it does not convince the human mind, all religious efforts are practically fruitless.

Humility is the sole condition and the one gate of entrance to life eternal. All other virtues arise from this root of all virtues and are measured by the intensity of its power. Weak is the will which deserts the divine ground of humility, the source of all spiritual power. Confused is the mind which does not see and recognize its inherent allegiance to and dependence from the truth of God. And depressed must remain the heart of the man who relies on his own sentimental resources without absolute assurance of their eternal reality and dignity.

Humility is the first law and commandment of our life, the origin and focus and the very spirit of lawfulness. It is impossible to affirm a law that is not based on the absolute ground of our dependence from God.

The first living contact with God is true humility. It is the most lawful contact because it is the most glorious contact, where worship becomes the consuming power of life. Due to this transcendent fact the respect for law is so insistent that even personal compassion does not dare to infringe on its authority and sentence.

Humility constitutes the consummate expression of our divine childship, by virtue of which our affinity to God, our affiliation with God and our imitation of God is proved beyond all doubt. Its exaltation imparts the greatest power to the soul. We are born of God.

We are born divinely and divinely our life must be fulfilled. Whether the temporary state of the soul be high or low, it does not alter this transcendent fact, for the Divine purpose in creation is unalterable.

However, the greater the soul's nearness to God the more overwhelming becomes the truth of divine childship. And the greater the distance, the less it is perceived. Yet Divine love never deserts the soul, however far it may stray from Him, and, at the first act of repentance, sends its leading ray of truth and love into conscience to guide the soul in its safe return.

If man would look at himself through the mirror of humility, he would see the true portrait of his soul. He knows and feels that he can see himself in this undeceiving reflex of truth, but his pride, with its relentless shame, prefers other, self-imposed mirrors.

The soul loses the sense of its divine childship through desecration of its own being, by abuse and violation of holy freedom and by deliberate removal of itself from the blessing guidance of the Will of God. Then its original fire of allegiance to God flickers down to a barely perceptible spark which, in the agony of its debasement, is compelled to carry the unavoidable burden of self-made passions.

From this unholy abyss, distance or fall, the most heart-rending cries to God are uttered. It is the God-created childship of the soul which causes this distress and suffering and, at the same time elicits the first act

of humility of the fallen whose sins are crushing its proud will. The return and rise to God which follows is the first reckoning with humility, which, owing to our familiarity with sin has been depicted more from the standpoint of our spiritual distress than our spiritual exaltation.

Our spiritual distress can be understood only through the understanding of the original and basic purpose of our life, the purpose of the participation in, cooperation with and affirmation of God's holiest life. If this purpose is not made clear humanity will remain, as it generally has remained, under the spell of fatalism from which even the worst distress will not be able to uplift it to a worthier life and greater human harmony.

Humility, being the first condition of worthy determinations, demands an overpowering appeal to the human honor and character. If our religious leaders will once accept, as by the very dignity of their mission they are conscience-bound to accept, divine childship as the sole ground of religious life, then the present denominational misunderstanding and hostility, which only augments human hatred, will soon give place to a greater and nobler religious life on earth.

If our educational institutions will become more permeated with the holy sense of humility, they will become more capable of inculcating higher and worthier ambitions in the new generations and thereby greatly contribute to the betterment of our human society.

And if human authorities will be mindful of the fact that they are only human beings burdened with serious responsibilities before God and humanity, thus demanding the principle of humility as the absolute guide of honor, wisdom and righteousness, then human strife will be turned into human friendship.

Having made the objective ground of humility fairly clear, let us now consider its subjective forms, through which the will attains virtuous power.

Affinity to, affiliation with and imitation of God are the principles of humility. Principles are prototypes, supreme laws, commandments and absolute demands. And what is the absolute demand of divine affinity, affiliation and imitation? The absolute demand of affinity is *faith*, that of affiliation is *devotion* and that of imitation is *gratitude*, the sole answer to the sacrificial call of our great destiny.

FAITH IN GOD

The first character of humility is faith in God, which constitutes the implicit and whole-souled avowal of and trust in our eternal Creator, Lord and Father. Were it not for the transcendent fact of our affinity to God we should be unable to aver and protest our faith in God, for there would be no absolute cause nor demand for such faith in our soul and, consequently, no possibility of its insistence in our self-consciousness.

Affinity to God is the objective and faith in God is the subjective bond of the soul with God. This bond is the eternal source, the holy ground and the sublime expression of religion.

All religious expressions of our life, their purity, elevation and power are estimated by the intensity of our faith in God. Since spiritual intensity is essentially volitional, therefore the power of faith depends primarily from the determination of the self-conscious and self-sentient will.

Affinity to God is the supreme gift of God. Being transcendently sacrificial and, consequently free, it is not a tyrannically compelling but a divinely inviting might for the affiliation with the holiest life of God.

Through this sacrificial act of God the highest dignity and honor is conferred on the soul. This dignity so deeply permeates our spiritual essence that the slightest declaration of personal unworthiness in acts, words or expressions of sentiments causes grief and shame. Thus also, in a contrary event, nothing gladdens and rejoices us so highly and permanently as the approval of worthy deeds. This power of spiritual dignity is so insisting, universal and forceful that no deed is executed without taking a more or less distinct recourse to it in our self-consciousness.

Thus the spiritual forces of the soul are inherently permeated with *conscience*, and, therefore, reflecting our affinity to God as our eternal and holiest Prototype.

Faith in God is the first and exclusive act of our will to conscience. It affirms the holiness, truth and love of God as well as our eternal obligation to Him. Religious traditions do not cause conscience. They only support conscience according to received religious inspiration or aspiration. For this reason the value of all historical traditions is scrutinized by conscience and accepted or rejected according to its elevation or the lack of it.

Faith is rightly claimed as one of the first virtues, because it is the first character of humility, the direct acknowledgement and acceptance of our affinity to God. Without this inward declaration and affirma-

tion, our will loses its greatest force for sustaining its spiritual dignity and cannot feel itself inwardly bound to keep faith with anybody. Once the connection of the soul with its principle of life is broken, all the evolutions and results of its determinations, thoughts and sentiments are scattered into inconsistent fragments, spreading continuous disorder and strife in our daily activities.

Unity of action depends on the acceptance of the unity of principles. God is the absolute unity of principles. And, if we do not want to accept this absolute divine unity as the ground, prototype and aim of our life, we are compelled to seek for some substitute in our independent ego, with all the disastrous consequences caused by an undivine independence.

Faith is primarily a question of the logic of our will. The will, being a self-conscious and self-sentient spiritual autonomic force, must at the very start of its movement declare its divine or undivine aim. So long as its self-consciousness and self-sentiency of its divine childship is not corrupted and distorted by self-imposed idols of passions, its faith in God is unyielding and its determinations and actions worthy, righteous and lovable.

The state of great souls above us is precisely the state of this supreme faith. It is their great power and joy. Even in the imperfect expressions of human martyrdom we see the power of faith affirmed and

praised by all who have not lost the sense of religious principles.

As facts prove, there are no absolute principles in the soul. But facts equally prove that the soul must conform with absolute principles of faithfulness. The whole nucleus of life consists in the faith in God. It is the one power which compels us to place faith in and keep faith with man. At the approach of each determination, thinking or feeling, the first question which presents itself is, can I place faith in it and keep faith with it? If I can, I must keep it, because faith is intrinsically a bond of will which can never free itself from the presentation of a faithful object.

God is the absolute object of faithfulness and it is for this reason that its power is so imperative, binding and undisruptible. Faith as such never breaks. It is the essence of fidelity and loyalty and the most palpable proof of the divine standpoint in us. By reason of this fact, faithless acts are so strongly denounced and condemned. Faith, as the first character of humility, is the first commandment, and faithlessness, as the first expression of pride, is the first condemnation of the soul. No man, be he ever so learned or ignorant, is free from the sentence of this implacable alternative, because the divine or the undivine is the sole alternative of our whole life.

The object and content of faith is the first point of all religious creeds as well as that of the chief tendency

of man. Yet, no religious form has yet explained the ontological and psychological profoundness of faith. It has only attenuated the great power of faith to the historical movements of religious sentiment with their more or less perfunctory forms of religious cults.

Faith is not a subject of any intellectual or sentimental attenuation, but the fundamental rock of religion, wherever it may originate. It is the ever-calling Voice of God for faithfulness to His Holiness, to His Truth and to His eternal Love. It is not a mere belief or individual opinion, but the fundamental, most intrinsic and necessary power of the whole humanity. Everybody is anxious to possess the power of faith within himself and to see it in others that he may himself be trusted by others and trust in others. And how wretched is the one who can trust neither himself nor others! All our human relations, whether collective or individual, are erected on the fundamental basis of faith and trust.

Naturalistic biologists have apparently overlooked this most vital fact of our life. They are sometimes right in criticizing the logical deficiencies or impossibilities of particular creeds, but how about their own biological logic of life? Shall we have faith only in their own naturalistic assertions? In that case, humanity has only one recourse, to become the slave of the incomprehensible nature, or more concretely, the slave

of those who propound its fatalistic teachings, wholly deprived of the power of conscience and honor.

Never have religious creeds advanced to such tyranny as the radical naturalism has in store for us, of which aims we already have sufficient proof in our present social conditions. For it must be remembered by everybody that each collective or particular tendency of man is the tendency for dominion over others. It is only the truly humble and faithful soul before God that neither claims nor wants dominion. All he claims and endeavors is service to God and humanity; for service is the one true spirit of Divine dominion. The motives of the humble are holy and, consequently, open to everybody without reservation. And its sentiments are sacrificial, scrupulously righteous and full of benevolence toward friend or foe.

Humanity consists of souls of little faith and, hence, its actions are little as regards the good. The buried ruins of history, and the recent destructions caused by political and financial passions and crimes, bear witness to our lack of faith in God and His ruling Will. We worship the sad heroism of brutal deeds and material achievements more than the power of faith and the grandeur and beauty of virtues, which, through their divine spirit, are gradually lifting us to a better life. Take away faith in God, and the soul becomes lost in its egocentric selfness and is deprived of the holy

course of its destiny and beatitude. The will becomes enchained by hazard, the horizon of thoughts becomes darkened and the heart feels weak, depressed and even desperate.

DEVOTION TO GOD

The second character of humility is piety. As affinity to God demands faith in God, thus affiliation with God demands devotion, the whole-souled determination of a strong and zealous attachment to God.

Humility is not only the inward consciousness and sentiment of our affinity to God, not only the most intimate pressure of fidelity — which is the logical sequence of the inward kinship to God, but also the free, unreserved and consummate dedication of the soul to God.

Through piety faith in God becomes a living faith; the will begins to move on the holy path of divine affiliation. Faith gives the power of participation in and piety the power of cooperating with the Life of God. Here the soul stands before God in the profoundest spirit of oblation, of offering to Divine glory its will, the spiritual power of glorification, of offering to Divine truth its mind, the spiritual power of divine vision and of offering to Divine love its heart, the repository of sublimest sentiments.

Such is the life of conscience in its greatness. Each act of the will, each gleam of thought and each outburst of the heart concurs instantly with the urging

and directing dictates of the Will of God. Devotion is the living life of divine childship, the source of greatness and power, of the might of wisdom, immaculate righteousness and the ever-attracting beauty of goodness. It is the life of consummate worship, of most inward prayer and of profoundest gratitude.

The stages and degrees of the concurrence with conscience distinguish the multiformity of the souls striving after virtues. The profoundness of humility finds its gauge and mirror in devoutness. Hence, though devotion greatly affects the heart, it, nevertheless, is the sequence of the constant determination of the will to be in union with God. Angels live on devotion, few human souls practice it rightly, and the sinner possesses none. Where God is not the ever-present Lord and Father, there exists no bond of union, faithfulness and devotion. Holy life requires holy efforts, especially in those who have lost the fundamental virtue of humility.

The frequent derision of devotion is due to religious ignorance, or is the consequence of the abuse of its profound content by superficial formality or hypocritical ostentation. The truly devout man is he whose will is permeated with humility, fortitude and blissfulness, whose mind is filled with divine vision, wisdom and simplicity, and whose heart contains sacrificial love, unswerving righteousness and profound goodness toward every man and creature. This is the true

likeness of the devout. Let the scoffers of devotion show us a stronger, wiser and better man!

Piety is the altar of humility, the bond of most intimate and affectionate intercommunication between God and the soul. It is the living prayer and eternal hearth of our most inward life, where we see and feel ourselves most real. Here worship of God rises to a living flame; here the protestations of faith and fealty attain their highest expression and obedience its profoundest incentive; here is enkindled gratitude which, with its heavenly incense permeates every movement of the soul's faculties. Here is enacted the profound scrutiny of our worthiest motives, deeds, thoughts and sentiments. Here all our sins are condemned and profoundly repented, determinations are formed to atone for all committed wrongs, the sublimest vows and resolutions for a worthier life are performed and the assistance of God for the rehabilitation of dignity and righteousness of the soul are implored.

Each soul possesses the spiritual power of devotion and uses it in everyday life. How much devotion is so eagerly spent on little and often unvirtuous things? How humble does one try to appear in order to attain selfish ambitions, undeserved merit or social station? How devoted he is to petty and vulgar pleasures, to selfish pursuits and to his selfish mediocrity or debasement, without a single serious effort to rise to a worthier and greater life. Indeed, each soul lives mainly on

the devotion of its efforts. But, unfortunately, it is the tendency of the human soul not to live on the devotion of its efforts to God and humanity, but on the devotion to its own independent ego. It even demands devotion for itself from others, but is unable to render devotion to God and those who most deserve it.

Piety is the true course of humility, the most inward laboratory of our spiritual forces and the field of our worthiest attainments. The whole grandeur and beauty of the cult of God dwells in piety, the living bond of our truest and most intimate intercommunication with our holiest Father. Thus when piety to God is absent, the living bond with God is disrupted.

The duty of obedience is based on devotion, which, according to the spirit of divine affiliation, possesses the supreme authority over our life. For this reason none obeys readily any cause or call unless he is devoted to it. Where the spirit of faith and devotion dwells, obedience is not a burden but a true inward joy in affiliating and cooperating with the glorious causes of our life.

Our supreme authority is the glorious Will of God, the holy determination to make us glorious, according to His own likeness. This is distinctly expressed in the urging, guiding and forbidding spirit of conscience to which we all must and do submit all our important resolutions. If, in this spirit of conscience, we do not see the immediate ground of our eternal destiny, the

glorious life of holy power, truth and love, and, if we do not embrace this Divine superspirit with our whole heart, we must not be astonished at the distortion and perplexity of our souls and the consequent strife in our endeavors.

The constant perplexity of our national and social institutions proves, to say the least, the deficiency of our definition of the supreme laws of life. And where the supreme laws of life are not clearly defined and not implanted in the very inwardness of our hearts, we can expect neither great spiritual leaders nor social order and harmony.

Without humility, faith and devotion to God there is neither law nor harmony. For in such conditions everybody can assume and often does assume self-willed authority, which is the first cause of all strife and conflict. Each soul is conscious of the power of dominion and if it is not willing to see and to submit to the supreme dominion of God, it seizes as much authority as it dares in the face of threatening opposition.

This seizing of undue authority, which is always abusive and specious, is the principal sin of man. It is the first turning from the Face of God to the despotic tendency of self-will, where the virtue of humility is denied and arbitrariness, self-assertion and strife have taken its place.

Divine authority is always full of dignity, of truth

and of love. It never judges without charity and never condemns without mercy. Even for the most brutal souls it keeps the path of conversion open. It always marks each soul with its proper countenance and through all the openings of the heart it invites to the eternal life of divine childship. This is the divine rule for all human authority, the imitation of which ought to be the most arduous task of all those who wield prestige and power in our human community. If temporary authorities do not follow this holy rule, if they do not heed the glorifying power of Divine authority, if its ordinances are not enlightening, benevolent and humane, one must not be astonished at the prevailing spirit of distrust and restlessness which secular authorities vainly attempt to prevent.

Since all evils derive from pride, faithlessness and the want of devotion to holy causes, the first task of authority is to prove the determination of and devotion to the holy cause of our life. No law can be revered and sustained that has no divine ground, and it must be a consummate fool who does not see this plain fact.

GRATITUDE TO GOD

As affinity to God demands faith in God, and as affiliation with God demands devotion, thus the gift of the imitation of Divine Life demands gratitude to God.

This threefold form of our inward relation to God gives us a clear and irrefutable vision of the sublime ground and aim of our life. It is unfortunately true that to the average soul this profound ground and sublime aim of life is not sufficiently perceptible for its spirit to be fully realized. Yet, it is also true that each soul has a subconscious feeling of this transcendent spirit. Prophets and mystics, ancient and modern religious writers and reformers, in pointing out this transcendent spirit, have nursed us from the low and crude materialistic debasement to the present spiritual amelioration.

However, it is not the average man to whom this exposition of virtues is directed, but to those with sufficient intellectual insight and sentimental preparation. To possess logic and order in thinking requires a refined and broadly schooled intellect. And to possess sublime sentiments requires at least some degree of virtuous training. If these conditions are not present,

man is too weak to appreciate the spirit of virtuous life, much less to follow it.

The average man, having but little control over the most serious problems of his life, always looks up to those who are or ought to be able to explain these problems. Therefore, it is for stronger and nobler characters that these pages are written, that they be enabled to employ with greater success their mental and sentimental faculties for the holy cause of life.

Gratitude to God is the inmost answer to the Divine gift of being able to imitate the Life of God. This Divine gift is the most expressive gift of Divine Love, and the living affirmation of our divine childship. Nothing less than profoundest gratitude can be the soul's answer to this holy gift.

Faith in God is the inmost protestation of our affinity to God. Devotion to God is our inmost leaning on God, for each relative affiliation must lean on its absolute source in order to be a relative portion of this might and be able to live worthily. And gratitude to God is the most affectionate endearment of divine childship. It fosters and refines obligation with delight, and thus is the most binding and most blessing product of humility.

In this virtue, either the voice of the soul is raised toward heaven in profoundest thanks for the participation in, cooperation with and imitation of Divine Life, or the soul lies prostrate before the transcendently

majestic throne of God in tears, which only a joyful gratefulness can elicit. Gratitude is the most inward hymn of the virtuous and every final sound of virtue is the sound of thanks. "Blessed be the Lord" is the world-embracing song of prophets, and "God bless thee" to a friend and stranger the most grateful wish.

Gratitude is full of intimacy and peace. It suffers neither strife nor vaunting, and its spirit is the spirit of great friendships. It causes, animates, cultivates and consecrates the glorious and beautiful bond of immortal friendship. Gratitude is also the phase of heavenly rest, where, during arduous labors, the virtuous soul surveys his sacred achievements and pours forth his profoundly felt thanks. These thanks concern not so much the complete fulfillment as the love and joy of fulfilling the obligation, for this virtue is not a vanishing but a constantly living power, and the exhaling warmth of a faithful and beautiful life.

Thus gratitude, in its inwardness, is not a mere incidental act of appreciative feeling, but the crowning might of humility, the ascending fragrance from the fire of virtuous determinations, a fragrance which draws everything holy into the virtuous heart, where the most cherished monuments of virtues are erected and perpetuated.

Consequently, gratitude is the ever-living memory of the highest and best, the great prompter and reminder of true reciprocity, which forgets neither love nor right-

eousness. The measure of its might is as unconfined as the gifts of God are boundless, and accordingly, is offered to all our benefactors with that deep obligation which is the reflex of their generosity. Hence, little kindness evokes little gratitude, greater kindness a greater gratitude, and the gratitude to God, the Supreme Giver, Whose gifts involve the eternal welfare of the soul, is the greatest of all.

From this it might appear that gratitude is based on justice. But in reality it is the reverse. The spirit of gratitude instils and causes justice, because gratitude is the moving and justice only the executing virtue. Hence, where there is no gratitude, righteousness is impossible—a fact which is often illustrated not only in general life, but even in friendly relations.

In the virtuous soul the gratitude for participation in the Divine Will is so complete that its application in all human relations becomes a necessity. No righteous man will denounce an evil deed of the one who has given proof of some worthiness with the same severity that he will denounce the evil deed of him who has no distinct worthiness. In all our judgments, and in the execution thereof, gratitude must always be considered, that it may prompt forgiveness of little offenses and enhance the ever-needed spirit of charity.

Gratitude is the living spring of blissfulness and the prompter of sacrifices, because it answers sacrifice with sacrifice. Its inward motive is to give more than it

receives, for in this motive dwells the spirit of God which *always* gives more than it receives.

Nothing is sweeter in life than the debt of love which defines gratitude in its essence. All virtuous love originates from this indebtedness to God, and, correspondingly, involves all those who partake in this great love and are instrumental in bringing it nearer to our poor vacillating and confused hearts. If this great virtue, which is the living expression of humility, were taught as it should be taught, humanity would soon have a much brighter face, and all its religious, social and personal relations would adjust themselves with surprising facility.

As the effective form of the virtue of humility, gratitude is the most distinct test of worthiness of the human character. Through this virtue the whole faith, loyalty and devotion becomes true and real. It involves all the soul's forces not only in praising but also in achieving the highest good.

Gratitude without deeds is only a superficial gratitude. But even this general superficiality of gratitude proves the ever-insisting spirit of obligation. A considerable material assistance, regardless of the apparent sincerity of emotions, cannot be dismissed with a mere expression of thanks. And much less can thus be dismissed a spiritual assistance which, by its very dignity, is of an infinitely greater importance.

The deed, and not mere thoughts and sentiments,

is the first proof of the human character; a worthy gift is a gift of worthy love. Is it right that gratitude be deprived of activity? The lack of active gratitude is the cause of all human disharmonies. We receive our life from God, we receive our rearing from our parents, we receive our education from them and from our teachers; and these deeds of love are too often the last things we think of. All the givers, from God to man, have a large volume of justified charges against each soul. Where the sense of gratitude is not active no mutual understanding and sentiment is possible.

In vain is the cry for mutuality where the virtue of faith in God is not the soul and substance of our endeavor, where the virtue of devotion to the highest cause of our life is not the infinite field of our activities, and where the virtue of gratitude is not our main and incessant animation in the fulfillment of our duties.

Concluding this chapter, let us bear in mind that humility, consisting of faith, devotion and gratitude, is the first and fundamental virtue, the root of the sublimest and best, and the profoundest ground of worthiness. It impels, leads, sanctifies and permeates all virtuous expressions of life; and all other virtues follow its profoundness and its elevation.

THE VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE

The virtue following humility is fortitude, the course, evolution and power of humility. The sublime dignity of the soul's affinity to and affiliation with God inherently demands supreme power of will to affirm its holy state of destiny.

Fortitude relates to humility as Divine Perfection relates to Divine Holiness, or, psychologically, as freedom or movement of the will to the soul's motor of the will. In each instance the activity of the principle is manifest in the process.

Since, through the attribute of His perfection, God reveals His absolute might, it is consistent and necessary that the soul, as the affiliating offspring of Divine love, reveals and proves the worthiness of its existence by a supreme effort of all its spiritual forces to God as the absolute prototype of holy might.

Relative power flows from the Divine attributes and can subsist on its eternal source only. Once this source is lost by neglectful or independent self-will, affiliation with God becomes weakened and our power of worthy activity is commensurately diminished.

Neither our human souls nor the worlds within the

compass of our external vision are in immediate nearness to the eternally burning fire of Divine Perfection from which flow all substances of life. For this reason our whole life lacks the immediate contact, view and warmth of Divine Life and, the consequent interest in Its unfathomable profundity.

We left the eternal source of spiritual power of our own free will, and with it the grandeur and felicity of our life. Hence by virtue of our free will, we must find the eternal source of might in order to regain the original power and bliss of our divine childship.

Fortitude, being the worthiest activity of the will, manifests itself through three volitional characters: *Inward energy for sanctification, perseverance in virtue and triumph over the evil.*

INWARD ENERGY FOR SANCTIFICATION

The cause of inward energy for sanctification is exaltation of Divine childship. The offspring of Divinity needs and desires to prove the worthiness of its holy origin, and, consequently, endeavors with all its power to remain in utmost nearness to the throbbing Will of God from whence its life is derived. The nearer the soul is to the center of its transcendent source, the greater is its power. It wants to attain its original position in order fully to cooperate with the Divine Will.

If the soul, through abuse or neglect of its holy freedom, forfeits the position of Divine nearness and, consequently regresses to a greater or less distance from the immediate contact with God, it becomes weakened, anxious and restless. Correspondingly with its distance, the eternal support and holy influx of Divine might is diminished as the result of the lack of nearness to the fount of might which animates the desire for great deeds, enlightens the mind with wisdom and inspires the love of sacrifice.

Divine affinity begets fortitude, faith holds it, devotion cultivates it and gratitude adorns it. The whole affiliation and cooperation of the soul with the Will

of God is predominantly that of fortitude, for fortitude is the movement of humility through faith, devotion and gratitude. Through fortitude the soul is mighty in its essence and great in all evolutions and expressions of life. Its inward energy transcends all forces of the universe, because it consists of the energy of sanctification—the consummate affirmation of the supreme Will of God.

This energy is heroism in its sublimest sense. Great souls are heroes of sanctified determination. Nothing is too great for them to attempt and attain, and nothing too little to raise to importance and grandeur. Grandeur is the object of fortitude and all the movements of the great will are great sanctified movements.

Freedom of the will intrinsically adheres to the energy of sanctification, for this is the real title to the right of freedom. All other energies and freedoms are baseless and worthless. Conscience palpably calls for this holy energy and our spiritual dignity demands it. Therefore, the cleaving of the soul's will to conscience is the eternal anchor of fortitude, the unrestrained following of conscience is the course of fortitude, and the holy victory over all ungodly obstructions is the crowning result of fortitude.

The freedom of God is the superessential attribute of Divine perfection, the prototype of all freedom. Consequently, the freedom of the soul is perfectibility, the sole worthy and logical course of our energy. The

proof of this fact is obvious. Where there is no energy to fulfill the laws of God, there is confusion and distress, and, on the other hand, the greater the energy for the sublime and good, the greater the blessing and peace—not a peace of indolence, but a peace of great internal activity, consisting in the consciousness of unselfish and worthy achievements.

The virtuous soul never ponders on vain achievements involving fame or material gain, but only on how to apply his energies to fulfill the greatest good toward others. He obtains this spirit through his intimate contact with God and offers freely his spiritual riches to all who desire to avail themselves of them. All his energy is centered on the one object, the attainment and distribution of spiritual wealth. In this object his cooperation with the Will of God becomes great, if not yet consummate. Is there a greater freedom possible? Or, is possession of worldly power worth more than the sacredness of the human character? The man whose conscience is not wholly debased will readily perceive and feel the answer to this question.

The greatness of the honor of man lies in the extent of his inward energy for virtue. Unfortunately, we seldom, if ever, come in contact with a highly virtuous man, and what is still worse, we are spiritually so undiscerning that, if we meet him, we do not recognize him. Humanity is so permeated with common self-seeking that it is unable to sense the profound worthiness of

another; hence, the great honor and energy of the virtuous soul remains a mystery to others and a holy secret to himself. Had humanity but a small number of men and women of great virtuous energy, our confused world, always on the brink of danger, would attain securer and much happier conditions of life.

True religious mission consists in the sanctification of souls, the inculcating and promoting of the inward energy of conscience. Thus far the task of guiding souls to divine childship has not developed its real power, because it does not yet possess the clear truth of our affinity to, affiliation with and imitation of Divine Life as the principal ground of religion. It only has aspirations for this truth. Without the clear vision of this all-important fact of life we cannot expect a permanent religious revival.

Furthermore, many men who officially teach religion are discordant among themselves and frequently hostile to the convictions of others. Instead of spreading unifying love they often spread hate under the cover of religion. Hate is the most poisoning, most perversive and most destructive force of spiritual life. No man with self-respect dares to express it. In view of this deplorable state, how is it possible to expect a world-embracing religious revival from denominational quarters?

The world-embracing revival depends on the spirit of the energy for sanctification. All efforts must be

employed by all endowed and stronger men for this sublime cause. If humanity complains of the lack of great spiritual leaders, why does it not endeavor to produce such leaders? Why does it not notice, encourage and assist those virtuously inclined, unassuming, thoughtful, vigorous and unselfish young men who are the best potential material for human leadership and order? There is no lack of noble intention, ability and talent among men, but there is a complete lack of the will to educate these higher forces to greater spiritual efficiency. In consequence of this lack, talents are applied to mere national, denominational or personal aims. Where the Superspirit of God is not recognized and accepted as the supreme leader of human order, elevation and happiness, the efforts of the best men have little success and value.

PERSEVERANCE IN VIRTUE

Perseverance in virtue consists in the unrestrained following of the Will of God. The first cause of perseverance is the insistence of humility, with its demand of faith, devotion and gratitude to God. No virtue is attainable without these principal factors of our life. The soul, in order to be mighty, must follow Divine determination to the gates of its inmost perfection that it clearly see and execute the holiest motives of Divinity. In this following consists the test of perseverance and the most fruitful course of the will.

This virtue, or even the attempt to attain it, is prompted by inward solicitude for the glorification of God and for the affirmation of our worthiness in Divine glory. This is God's holy Will toward us. Holiness suffers no impurity in its presence and requires the highest heroism of the soul's will for what is holy. Virtuous heroism is inspiring and beautiful, and every throb of humble determination, every ray of the God-seeing mind, and each impulse of the sanctified heart is heroic. None but the highest heroes of virtue surround the throne of God. The superhuman types of souls possess precisely this habitual heroism, the realizing power of intimate affiliation with God.

In our upward course to God, the necessity for perseverance is impelling and exacting. Abhorring the darkness of passions and vices, the soul longs to return to holy honor, holy freedom, light and lasting happiness in the life of divine childship.

Purification through repentance and destruction of low habits depends on ardor and perseverance, for without these nothing worth mentioning is attainable. On the other hand, the depth of the fall is commensurate with the persistence in the evil; therefore, it is just that evil persistence be eliminated by equal or higher perseverance in the good.

Many good resolutions fail owing to the oversight and neglect of this fact of justice. This fact, however, cannot become a living fact in us unless it is encouraged and nourished by humility, by the recognition of our dependence from the almighty Will of God, by the necessity of faith in the holiness of His love, by the presentation of devotion as the sublimest conduct of life and by the eternal debt of gratitude to God. Without this spiritual nourishment in our intimate affiliation with God no absolute justice is possible. No man has originated either absoluteness or justice. They stand of themselves above us as the dominating glory of all life.

The practical school of our life is perseverance in the effort to attain virtues. Nothing great can be learned without it. No skill is attained without per-

sistent practice, and virtue demands the highest spiritual skill in order to be powerful and effectual. Whether it is a duty to be fulfilled, a thought to be considered or a sentiment to be awakened and made clear, the skill of conscience is required to make the result virtuous. The whole exercitation of each deed, thought and sentiment depends on its virtuous motive and aim.

This fundamental law of conscience must be ever-present before we can be assured of the virtuousness of our deeds. This practice is of the highest necessity, because what originally issues from God must be performed divinely. On this purpose our chief attention must be focused in order to reach a distinct understanding of a truly virtuous act. If this purpose is overlooked or neglected, pride creeps into the heart, as is so often noticeable in souls even of nobler tendencies.

No man is so great as to have a right to exercise absolute authority over others. Absolute authority is strictly a Divine prerogative; and human authorities are mere instrumental authorities, the relative guardians of the little good our souls have attained.

Hitherto our world has had few men in authority who have been distinguished by the virtuous spirit of fortitude. On the contrary, we have seen our ruling men in all ages, filled with selfishness and vices. The occasional attempts for betterment have improved our conditions altogether too little because there have been too few virtuous teachers and too few men to support

them, to achieve a real and lasting spiritual improvement.

The ruling authorities are nothing but the legal expression of the will of the masses who support and tolerate them, and, unless the masses are moved to greater fortitude of conscience and character we must not expect a marked amelioration in our human relations. Thus we see that fortitude is the inalienable condition of our inward progress and that perseverance in fortitude is the sole course of our personal and social elevation.

What constitutes the power of the will which we so often admire? It is not so much the resolution in itself as the faithful perseverance in its fulfillment which causes our admiration. Then the whole importance, truth and devotion to a great cause is made plain. How much power of will is squandered in obtaining a selfish aim of personal ambition, vanity, sensual delight and luxury, all of which are denounced by conscience as the enemies of divine and human order and of true harmony and happiness, and all of which have the contagious force of vitiating other souls?

Whenever we meet a man of extraordinary religious character and ask him how he attained his spiritual intellect and power, he will tell us that he persevered in his worthy decisions, he was faithful to his vows, covenants or promises, he was devoted to the truest and

best and that he feels profound gratitude to God for the faith and devotion to his divine destiny.

Perseverance is to be discriminated from patience, which is only a passive expression of perseverance. While perseverance demands all energy in order to enact virtue, patience is only concentrated on bearing all hindrances which restrain the soul's eagerness in attaining virtue. Thus patience is, so to speak, a gentle brake on virtuous energy. Patience follows perseverance but does not urge or guide it. There are many who patiently wait for a higher life, but few who steadfastly work for the attainment of it. Mystic quietism and contemplation illustrate this patient religious tendency, which notwithstanding its worthy features, has proved utterly insufficient to further the progress of religious life.

TRIUMPH OVER THE EVIL

Since cooperation with the Will of God constitutes the virtue of fortitude, the superhuman souls take a tremendous part in combating the evil in lower worlds and conditions of life. We already have a limited view of this fact in our own little world. Though we have no exact knowledge of the great organizations of the mighty spirits above us, we nevertheless are able to form a sufficient idea of their influence by understanding the invincible power which great virtues confer. We find examples of this fact in our human history. In the course of the ages, great souls of high, virtuous courage and inspiration have appeared. Combat with the existing evil and the pointing out of the virtuous road to heaven was the labor of their lives.

Each of these great souls manifested the particular virtue that he possessed, and, through the might of their influence, humanity has been raised from low passions to a more tolerable state, in which tangible progress has been made in the education of the human character. The effect and example of their fortitude has given and is yet giving us the view and the feeling of the necessity for a virtuous factor in order to insure a tolerable human concord. The result of the dis-

regard of their virtuous teachings and admonitions is seen in our police and state regulations, prisons and wars.

In our personal combat with evil, the soul discloses and develops the greatest courage. Freedom from tyrannical pride, from the besottedness of conceit, from the insipidity of vanity, from the madness of envy and greed, as well as from the morose bitterness of the loveless heart, the dangers of injustice and the profligacy of the love of the flesh, are all objects which are worthy of and should inspire the greatest efforts and courage of all better souls. Nothing relieves the soul from this base and dishonorable bondage save the practice of fortitude.

In our earthly life no achievement is more beneficent than the triumph of freedom from sin. This is the main tendency of our education. For, only then the soul begins to understand and attain the love for the profoundness and power of virtuous life. Only then it begins to feel keenly the high honor and power flowing from the faithfulness to God. And only then it understands and longs for the blissfulness and beauty of piety and gratitude. Then life begins to be real. Every virtuous deed, thought and sentiment adds to the positive account of a glorious life, and, with each advancing stage of virtuous progress, the soul rises higher and higher until it reaches the consummation of its efforts and labors at the eternal throne of God.

Countless opportunities are open to those who have the power of virtuous character to battle against the existing evil of spiritual sloth, mental darkness and debasing selfishness. Where are those who will seize these great opportunities? Is not the world longing and waiting for them? We prepare millions for battlefields, we are spending unlimited sums for political issues and, in the event of war, we even invoke God's help in these issues. We encourage our fathers, sons and brothers to bravery, we face death, destruction, heart-rending suffering, disease and starvation, and all for issues of a minor order. Surely, if we do not have the spirit of sacrifice of the first order pertaining to the virtuous character of mankind, we must pay one hundredfold for issues of a minor order. We must endure and witness the ghastliness of human passions before we awaken to the fact that the prime factor of our inward and outward relations is the human character. For in the human character lies the real spiritual battlefield, and all essential and most pressing labor must be concentrated on this inward battle.

Nowhere should fortitude be exercised as constantly as in the rise of our character, the fortress of our God-given honor and the invincible rampart against evil aggression. The character of the soul must be triumphant, for such is the Will of God and the demand of all final issues of conscience. It is worth while to suffer and to die for any spiritual advancement, for

in a world like ours, suffering and sacrifices are the surest stepping stones to virtuous progress.

Owing to its low religious state, humanity craves for continuous examples and tangible pictures, as all children do. Far removed from religious manhood, it needs all the manly leadership that can be furnished by those of greater spiritual attainments; it needs an army of religious and philosophical teachers of the highest type of conscience, character and knowledge, who will strive to free it from the debasing habits of self-seeking and self-complacency, and establish social rules which will fill our earth with lasting blessing.

Here the rich and the poor can compete with noblest zeal. Means and ability are mutual servants. If fortunes are demanded for material rights and comforts, why should they not be demanded for the education and edification of humanity? If man does not heed the terrible lesson of suffering, and forgets the evils which have caused it, he will delay the opportunity for the triumph over the evil, and, in due time, will suffer more than ever for his selfish neglect. Great world-shaking events are potent means and opportunities for greater spiritual progress.

The main power of the triumph over the evil lies in the energy of sanctification and perseverance in virtue. Without this reason of worthy activity the evil among men cannot be eliminated. The character of the soul cannot grow on undivine ground. There

is a principle to all things and with so much more reason a principle for worthy growth. The might of this principle is the ever-battling conscience with the evil for the sake of glorious edification.

Conscience is the holy focus of our religious life and the power of inspiration to and execution of all worthy deeds. It is the divine former of our character and the conqueror of all evil. Consequently, the one who has dignity and honor at his heart must not only extricate and guard his conscience from all evil association and influence, but also seek for, find and cherish such association as will assist him to be a better man.

Friendship and friendly associations are not given for selfish purposes. They are sacred and sacramental spiritual bonds, and the one who fears to lose his whimsical and selfish independence in such friendship is not worthy of it. Profound friendship derives from the mutual energy of sanctification and from the mutual support in the perseverance in virtues, for through this holy solidarity the soul is assured of the final triumph over the evil and of a freer course to glorious life.

THE VIRTUE OF BLISSFULNESS

Humility is the fundamental cause, and fortitude the fundamental course of spiritual blissfulness, precisely as Holiness and Perfection of God are the cause and course of His Eternity. Virtues, being the relative reflex of Divine attributes, possess the inherent order of Divine attributes. Their logic is unalterable. They relate to the following of the holiest Life of God, the absolute prototype of all spiritual activity.

All worthy deeds and all worthy states of souls have their absolute prototype from which they receive their inspiration and blessing. An independent relativity is impossible and unthinkable. Even the minutest effects have their objective causes. And why should the greatest effect in our life, which is blissfulness, not have a supremely objective cause?

This objective cause is Divine eternity, the perfect fulness of Divine Life. Owing to this transcendent fact the desire for immortal life is so insisting. Only spiritual despondency temporarily suppresses this desire, but it cannot eliminate it.

Immortality is the sense of eternity, of all inspiration and of inward promise. Were it not for this universal

fact our life would be aimless and useless; we should have no reason for expecting glory, honor, and happiness. These objects are the main objects we are living for. They are the life-giving and life-supporting objects of life. If these objects could be eliminated, life itself would have to be eliminated. Life would have no real object for which to live; there would be no glory, no worthiness, no truth and no love and, consequently, no worthy personal reason for any worthy attainment in life.

It is the operation of Divine eternity, the holy influence of Divine Life which constantly causes in our soul the perception and sensation of the flashes and sparks of immortality. Indeed, unenlightened is the soul which only perceives the sparks of immortality, and dark is the one which does not care to perceive them, although they burn its heart. But the virtuous one who sees the light of life and feels the warmth of life in immortality has a clear vision of his glorious origin and aim, and his courage never abates in reaching his final goal, the imitation of the eternal Life of God.

Difficult and seemingly impossible as the fulfillment of this great life appears to the poor human soul, it is the one life which is holy, true and full of love. Its gloriousness must be fulfilled and all our interests must be concentrated on this holy aim. Shirking or delaying of holy achievements is ignominious; moreover, it is

followed by constantly increasing danger, making the final efforts harder and more perplexing.

Time is not given for squandering our spiritual forces for the sake of selfish satiation, but for the strict account of our duties to God and man. Otherwise, time as such would have no worthy purpose of existence. Only unimportant men take time lightly; only those who render services neither to God nor humanity, and those who believe that time is their own personal property. Yet, when the hour of responsibility strikes, it is for time they always beg.

If little duties are so intimately involved in time, how much more important it ought to be to each man to take time into serious consideration in respect to his glorious destiny. Time is the natural flux of immortality in which each soul manifests its temporal worthiness or unworthiness. It is the natural recorder of all our deeds for the sake of immortal values, and not a contradiction nor the opponent of Divine eternity. Time follows eternity as all natural laws and forces follow the creative motive of God's eternal Life.

The whole motive of God in His adorable creation is divine following, which means, the participation in, cooperation with and affirmation of God's holiest life. This Divine motive is the destiny of our life. It is heaven with its inexhaustible treasures of glory, power and beatitude, awaiting each one who wants to return to divine childship, to the state of consummate imita-

tion and affirmation of the Life of our holiest Father.

Let us now consider the characters of the virtue of blissfulness that we may have a broader understanding of its essence. The characters of the virtue of blissfulness are: *Security in God, peace in God and joy in God.*

SECURITY IN GOD

The ground of security in God is the divine affinity of the soul to God, the sanctuary of unassailable God-imparted dignity and power. Its concomitant faith in, devotion to and gratitude for this dignity constitutes the inward center of the virtuous will and its immortal stronghold of holy right.

There is no holy right without the holy ground of Divine Life, for right pertains only to the freedom of such motives as insure holy achievements. For this reason unholy deeds are forbidden and condemned. Rightful is only what is holy, true and lovable. Thus rightfulness is the freedom of fulfilling the motives of all worthy deeds.

This right to holy freedom constitutes our security in God. Wherever this holy right is not strictly followed, the ground of our very existence becomes uncertain, our thoughts become distracted and our heart becomes restless. In consequence of this deflection the soul becomes more intense in its feeling for itself and takes hold of any minor, less worthy object than the one for which it is predestined. Thus, whenever this holy right is abused and violated, laws of men crumble and human order is threatened.

Security in God is our sole stronghold and refuge. Not possessing absolute might in itself, the soul cannot rely on anything except the might of God. In our combats, disappointments and grief we are longing for the object of supreme trust, that trust which gives us courage and hope for regaining inward assurance of the imperishable value of our life.

This assurance is conditioned by the correspondence of our self-conscious and self-sentient will with conscience. If our faith in God is strong, our security in God is also strong. Then the vicissitudes of life are easily controlled and employed for our virtuous growth and the benefit of others.

In our sinful world none can attain security in God without great inward battle, which is the battle of implicit faith in God and His holy order of life with the faithlessness of man and his unholy disorder and habits. Living in the midst of the turmoil of human passions, it requires a truly virtuous determination to brave their evolutions and revolutions. Passions are so deeply embedded in the human heart that only few are strong enough to withstand their deceiving lure.

From the ground of implicit faith in God alone can our spiritual victory, and with this victory our immortal security, be attained. The real battlefield is the spiritual battlefield, where each one battles within himself and in himself proves his heroism or cowardice. Every human being knows this inward battlefield, but only

few are brave enough to meet face to face with conscience and, cost what it will, choose the highest alternative.

None but the virtuous soul experiences the heavenly elation of inward security, for to him virtue is the power of worthiness, of holy light, wisdom, genuineness, sacrifice, righteousness, supreme goodness and transcendent beauty.

In every effort, trial and tribulation the ascending soul takes refuge in this eternal stronghold, prays for its nearness and reaches out its arms to it like a trustful child to its mother. The strongest as well as the weakest need this holy refuge, the virtuous to avoid temptation and confusion in the performance of his duties, and the unvirtuous to be saved from affliction and distress.

The concomitant of security is fearlessness. The humble soul has no fear, except the fear of offending the Majesty of God. He is unswerving in his virtuous attempts, efforts and undertakings, and no human influence sways his virtuous determinations. Slander, persecution, and even satanic cruelty are of no avail. Fearlessness in virtue survives the inflicted wrong, crowns and blesses the victim, and in the record of human conscience and honor, condemns the ungodly and cowardly deed of the persecutor.

Not only in outwardly heroic instances does the virtuous soul manifest fearlessness. Less striking but

more persistent is his disregard of fear in his unobtrusive life. Unless he is acknowledged by religious associations which, however, are not always appreciative of the virtuous, he is unknown in the midst of men. Even parents, relatives and benevolent friends, know him little or not at all. No one but his spiritual equal knows the extent of his inward determinations, and when he makes mention of them, he is understood but dimly.

Being different from others, he is often suspected, distrusted, sometimes even ridiculed or hated, but seldom loved. He keeps aloof from the common passions of the world, whose display pains him and whose motives horrify him. That humanity is not easily corrigible, he knows only too well. If he gives a word of courage, of inward explanation or of sympathy, he is sometimes appreciated. But if he utters a word of righteous remonstrance he provokes aversion and fear.

Living in the realm of his great conscience with God he is far from the common life of this world. His intellect may be distantly admired but it gives little satisfaction, because it avoids intellectual ostentation or affected brightness. His conduct is earnest, modest, calm and thoughtful. His serious words do not appeal to the fancy of human vanities. They touch the conscience and strike the character. This is precisely the spark of the soul, although a dim spark in the average soul it is, which human haughtiness forbids to be touched or stirred.

The heart of the virtuous is filled with love for mankind, but men do not want the love of a virtuous heart. They want an exclusive heart, only for themselves, for their own use, and for nothing else. They do not believe in pure unselfish love. They long only for personal returns, regardless of how dishonorable the motive may be. Thus the virtuous soul often passes through this land of strangers with profound compassion for his fellow beings, and with constant longing for association with great souls that live in the nearness to God.

This profound longing for the great future life is little understood by those who do not realize that the virtuous soul has a much profounder sense of sociability than the unvirtuous. His life is filled with the willingness for spiritual communication and service. No wonder that, amidst the flux of human frivolities and the hum of selfishness, he does not feel at home. Thus his frequent solitude appears misanthropic, while, actually, he only avoids the depressing atmosphere of passions, in order to hold himself secure from any loss of the purity and beauty of his virtuous sentiments.

The virtuous soul, except for the sake of mission, wants no strangers near him; he wants friends. He looks for a friend in every soul he meets, for his heart is always full of sublimest friendship. It cannot bear another life except that of friendship, the sole secure contact and life of all great souls. Are we then justi-

fied in wondering why the virtuous soul so constantly longs for the great life beyond?

Great souls are invariably great friends. Their ties of esteem, appreciation and love are founded on the love of God, the one beatifying security of immortal friendship. Angels are intimate friends, for the Love of God is satisfied with nothing less than the consummate beatification of the soul, both with God and sanctified souls. Hence the distant feeling of immortal happiness in our more friendly relations.

The following of God demands allegiance to everything virtuous. Each soul must be virtue personified, because virtue is the real subsistence of each worthy personality. The failure to cleave to this holy subsistence makes our souls so small in their motives and so insignificant in their deeds. The unrestrained motive to *be* virtuous is the sole motive capable of eliciting beatifying security and the power of realizing great deeds.

PEACE IN GOD

As the soul's affinity to God is the real source of our security in God, thus the soul's affiliation with God is the real source of its peace in God. When these transcendent conditions of spiritual life are not present in our inwardness, our volition is inconstant and weak, our self-consciousness dim, and our self-sentiency oscillating. Whatever is not directly connected with the absolute principle of life must, by force of this inconsistency, face hazard, with all its irretrievable disorder and disquietude.

Peace in God is virtuous power imparted to those who guard their affiliation with God with the most intense solicitude of their wills. Here the guarding of our conscience, as the superspiritual and formal guide of our actions, becomes so powerful that unrestrained devotion to conscience is its constant demand. As the spirit of security demands faith in God, thus the spirit of peace demands devotion to God. There is no inward peace in any human action, unless our whole devotion is concentrated on a holy cause. Then holy peace becomes one of the most powerful factors in great achievements. Its power of inward assurance

imparts invincibility and its power of inward devotion imparts beatitude.

Holy peace is the might of divine harmony and the heavenly fruit of virtuous determinations. "*It is well done*" are the words of its calm spirit which, like a celestial balm, soothes the strain of virtuous exertion. Peace is the eternal healer of all strife and the comforter of the righteous in all his struggles. Its might is unobtrusive and constant; it simply follows each virtue, as a holy fragrance follows a heavenly flower.

The spirit of peace is the most effective spirit of order. It installs and sustains the needed harmony which blesses our life. Each virtuous institution is built, ruled and managed in order to enhance peace. This is the exclusive mark of its divine distinction. In heavenly abodes peace reigns supreme. Indeed, its infinite and magnificent harmony passes human understanding.

The passionate soul cannot conceive the achievements of great deeds without the roar of cannon, and the spirit of strife or carnage. The peaceful soul looks for strength in virtue as the sole source of real and lasting might. It is ever ready to suffer and to die, but not to cause suffering and death to others. The fruit of victory, through unjust death, is sublime to the virtuous. To the wicked, however, who cannot be brought to peace save by suffering or horror, death is depressing and appalling.

Peace is the absolute requisite of permanent understanding. Thoughts in their very essence are peaceful, and only the explosive passions of the heart displace them from their basic conscience and scatter them into incoherence. Peace brings understanding of oneself and of one another. No thinker, of whatever branch, can rightly construe his thoughts unless he is at peace.

Furthermore, a peaceful word sinks deeper than oratory. There is solemnity in everything peaceful, for it is the breath of virtue. Peaceful compositions in poetry, music and art bring relief to mind and heart and implant assuaging recollections, with the concomitant sense into our inwardness that we should be the children of peace.

The Voice of God is not loud. It is so peaceful that often it is hardly perceptible. Nevertheless, it is the mightiest Voice that speaks. The profound sense of duty is full of peace, or, it demands peace; for even in its urging and animation it immediately installs peace. Inspiration, even in the midst of vehement feeling and suffering, is always peaceful.

Nothing but the weakness of human will feels the burden of inward labor. The virtuous one rejoices in it and for this he is blessed with inward peace. It is needless to mention the obvious difference between peacefulness and indolence. It is enough to see the peaceful attitude of the virtuous soul, where the power of will, intellect and sentiment are expressed in admir-

able harmony, and compare him with the passionate man, destitute of fortitude and of every spiritual attainment and refinement.

Only souls that profoundly feel their holy affinity to God, that profoundly desire to affiliate with and follow the holiest Life of God, whose humility is consummate through supreme faith in God, whose devoutness permeates all their forces and whose gratitude thrills their deepest inwardness, are blessed with peace everlasting.

In our upward course peace is our inward longing, but this longing cannot be appeased unless we undertake and pursue the path of virtue, a path so narrow, steep and difficult. It takes all the courage we possess, and all that we obtain by prayer, to move upward on this ascending path.

But it is worth all our effort, for inward peace is the divine manifestation of God's own state of Superexistence and Eternity. Only consummate virtues can live there, and to attain them is the irremovable task of each soul which, as yet, is not living in the majestic presence of God.

Our divine childship must not only be recovered and reaffirmed, but it must also be resplendent with the intensest animation of the Divine Superspirit, and then divine peace shall be ours. For this peace is the peace of eternal glory, truth and love in God, the final aim of our life. Every delay in fulfilling this

holy purpose is worse than fruitless and every shirking is debasing. If we do not progress onward of our own free will, the fire and sword of our passions will drive us with their inherent ruthlessness to the recollection that we are the children of our Heavenly Father, Who patiently awaits our return into the eternal abodes of His glorious peace.

Humility, the inward state of our divine childship, is the ground of peace. There is no lasting peace without it. Faith is the heavenly support of inward peace, and devotion and gratitude its heavenly delight. Fortitude unfolds peace in all its implications and applications, and even if it strikes with awe and remorse, these strokes of conscience are soon transformed into peace. And beatitude is the crown of eternal peace.

Each soul rightly feels that it must have peace, but it cannot attain it except as a result of the virtuous efforts for which the soul is created. Glory, worthiness and honor constitute the goal of the soul. There is no peace without them. Glory is as ravishing as it is peaceful, and therein consists its beauty. Only wickedness is noisy and hideous.

It is the lack of inward worthiness which fans dissatisfaction with oneself and others. But the fault lies less with others than with oneself; for the virtuous man is not afraid that he will be disturbed or turned from his glorious course. By reason of the fact that

he is virtuous, peace holds and blesses him in all circumstances.

Virtues are not boisterous. The might of peace is manifested in all their expressions. They are the life of heaven and on their standards is the heavenly greeting, "Peace be with you." Peace is the ingratiation of heaven, the meekness of the virtuous and the promise to the weak and the sinner. Because of the profundity of its intimacy with God, humility is the most peaceful virtue of all virtues. It is so peaceful that it is the most sacredly guarded secret of the soul's life. Even fortitude, the power of animation, never asserts itself. Secure and confident of its right, it proceeds and accomplishes its virtuous acts. Thus blissfulness imparts security and peace to the virtuous soul and fills it with joy.

JOY IN GOD

The final character of blissfulness, as well as of the inward expression of humility and fortitude is joy in God, the fruitive state of those who follow the Life of Divinity.

The participating affinity to, the cooperating affiliation with and the affirming imitation of Divine Life fill the soul with that heavenly bliss which only the might of Divine eternity can impart.

The Life of God, in its final expression, is a life of eternal blessing. Divine holiness demands blissfulness, Divine perfection expands it and Divine eternity upholds it as the supreme attraction of virtuous life. For this reason all profounder souls feel this eternal attraction and often make heroic efforts to reach this holy state. Also for this reason each unvirtuous soul is restless; because, constantly searching for blissfulness, it seizes every opportunity to grasp a happy moment, permissible or unpermissible, in order to obtain some tangible fruition of life.

Each soul is hungry for the joy of life. This joy is caused by the continually attracting and inviting blissfulness of the Divine state which pulsates in the inwardness of each heart. The Divine state is the

living prototype of life and requires holy willingness and knowledge to attain it. And no holy fruition of life can be attained without the willingness for and knowledge of the holy life. Thus, even in the last expressions of virtuous life, which are always the most tangible, most visible and most adored expressions by man, the self-conscious will, in order to be self-sentient of its worthy state, must be fully active.

As all effects of life are conditioned by processes and principles of life, thus Joy in God is conditioned by security and peace in God which again are conditioned by holy fortitude and humility, the living source of all blissfulness. How is it possible to have security and power without holy faith and fidelity? How is it possible to have peace and the strength of perseverance without inmost devotion? And how is it possible to attain immortal joy and the triumph over the evil without profound gratitude?

Each soul has in its conscience distinct perceptions and sensations of these holy conditions, but the weight and darkness of its passions prevents a clear concept of and a living sentiment for these conditions. Inordinate with and recalcitrant as the soul is to its glorious destiny, it strives for less conditioned or even unconditioned pleasures in order to fill temporarily the ever-longing gap of immortal beatitude.

Immortal beatitude is the most inward longing of

each soul and regardless how much or how little one is disposed to believe in immortality, this longing is in him. No life is satisfied until it bears the fruit of its life. And the fruit of spirituality can be no other than the consummate fruition of the eternal source and might from which spiritual life derives.

Immortal beatitude is joy in God, the joy of our divine affinity, the joy of the dignity of affiliation with God and of the immortal power of imitating His holiest Life. It is the state of consummate divine childship, the state of eternal blissfulness and blessing, the crowning wreath of a sanctified hero and the holy fruition of supreme innocence. Thus joy in God is the heavenly stream of Divine love, repleting the deepest recesses of our spirituality.

Moreover, holy joy is the most inward gratification of Divine love, the most blissful and triumphant bond of mutual gratefulness between God and His sanctified child, and, consequently, the beatification of personal worthiness and of sacrificial might of holy love.

This holy delight in each virtuous deed, thought and sentiment is the eternal reward and fruition of the divinely humble and faithful. For this reason each virtue bears and carries the full measure of bliss, rewarding each holy aspiration, effort and achievement. Faith in God bestows beatifying security; piety, beatifying peace; gratitude, beatifying joy; the vision of

God, beatifying light; and the love of God, the spirit of eternal felicity.

Joy in God is the consummation of spiritual rapture and ecstasy. There is nothing in our poor human life to give an approximate illustration of it. But the highly virtuous soul possesses distinct visions and the absolute assurance of the grandeur of heavenly life. From this eternal treasure-house of bliss and blessing flow the great gifts of God, the riches of heavenly compensation, bestowed on all those who prove to be the great heroes of virtuous attainment, the true sons of God.

Heaven is the highest community of saints, for only there exists the consummate communion with God. Our little religious congregations, whether those with thousands or millions of adherents, are but a remote and imperfect reflex of this heavenly communion. There the joy in God is the pulsation of life, and here only a serious promise.

All virtues pertain mainly to the will, and particularly those described in the preceding pages. *Humility*, with its characters of faith, piety and gratitude, pertains mainly to the self-conscious and self-sentient motor of the will. *Fortitude*, with its characters of virtuous energy, perseverance and triumph over evil, constitutes the course of virtuous volition, and intrinsically relates to the self-conscious movement and free-

dom of the will. *Blissfulness*, with its characters of security, peace and joy in God, constitutes the unfolding of virtuous attainments which relate to the self-sentient motive of the will. Thus we see the evident consistency of the forms of the will with the virtues and Divine commandments for the will.

VIRTUES OF THE MIND

Self-consciousness of the will is the principle of mental consciousness, for the activity of the soul does not depend on mere consciousness of outward facts, but on the standpoint of the motive of the self-conscious will relatively to action. Consciousness is only a mental process of the ever-active, self-conscious will. Therefore, mental virtues are precisely in the same relation to the virtues of the will as consciousness is to the self-consciousness.

Each virtue of the will permeates and controls the mental forces and forms of the soul in the same manner as the will permeates and controls the whole mental process. Mentality only follows the will in all its movements and motives. This mental following is as formal as the will is formal in itself. Otherwise, there would be an essential conflict between the will and the mind, which does not exist. What we generally call conflict of the will or sentiment with the mind is in reality the conflict of our self-conscious and self-sentient will with conscience. There are no psychic conflicts in the soul as such. There are only religious and moral conflicts in us.

The soul is, so to speak, a perfect spiritual mechanism. It can think and feel what and whenever it wills. But it cannot attain and possess anything justly unless the superspiritual conditions of worthiness and value, the conditions of conscience, are accepted and fulfilled.

These conditions of conscience are virtues, the formal Superspirit of God, dwelling under each particular force and form of our spiritual structure in order to give us the power of dignity, light and love for the realization of worthy life.

The conditions of worthiness are explained in the foregoing chapters. Now let us consider how these principal virtues develop in our mentality and how this development attains a virtuous state.

The virtuous state of the mind pertains to three characteristically mental virtues, to the *mental tendency* to *God*, to *wisdom* and *simplicity*.

MENTAL TENDENCY TO GOD

The profoundest undercurrent of the mind is the unrestrained tendency toward the knowledge of God. This tendency, however, is not a tendency of a mere abstract mind, as the idealistic schools of philosophy presume, but an inward tendency of the self-conscious will through consciousness.

Consciousness is the vision of all outward life, while self-consciousness is that of inward life. The outward life has interest for us only in so much as this interest corresponds with our inward life, which means, with the personal position of our spiritual ego relatively to the intrinsic worthiness of the manifestations of life. All observations of life in general, of all its universal laws and phenomena have only this reason and this aim. Knowledge without its application to worthy action is unavailable. The variations of this application correspond with the degrees of human intelligence, or, more precisely, with the elevation, mediocrity or debasement of the human conscience.

From the primitive fetichism and polytheism to the loftier visions of Hinduism, Parseeism, Confucianism, Platonism, and the Old and New Testaments, with their various interpretations, the mental tendency

moves toward the religious elucidation of God and of our relation to Him.

The naturalistic bent of the human intellect endeavors to attain the same thing, however, with less or no regard for personal obligation toward the absolute principle of life. The divinity the naturalist is searching for is presupposed to be an impersonal substance, energy, biological ground, or law, or some other indefinite creative force and evolution. In other words, it is an "unknowable" or "unconscious" something that is capable of causing knowable and conscious beings; a logical contradiction which the naturalist does not notice.

Though it is evident that both the religious and naturalistic tendencies are under the influence of the monistic principle of logic, their aim of vision differs radically. The religious tendency is an inherent movement of conscience, while the naturalistic tendency is a movement of an abstract mind without conscience.

Since conscience is undeniable, and, at the same time, a very sensitive factor, the naturalist endeavors to append it as a sort of moral sense to the mind and concurs with the opinion of scholastic philosophers that conscience is a mental faculty which discriminates between right and wrong. With this superficial and perverted explanation, conscience is disposed of as the real might of the soul, and, consequently, the objective

and formal might of conscience is ignored both by the orthodox and the atheist.

After this initiatory statement of the present theological and philosophical difficulty pertaining to the mental tendency to God, let us now consider its three implicit characters: the *adherence to Divine Light*, *attention to the Voice of God* and *cleaving to Conscience*.

ADHERENCE TO DIVINE LIGHT

The transcendent fact that God is the absolute principle of truth and of the consequent source of the soul's mental equipment to truth predicates the necessity of adherence to Divine Light as the prime condition of both objective and subjective cognoscibility.

At the very beginning of our mental activity we notice two factors, the perceiving faculty of our consciousness and the object perceived by it.

During the act of the perceiving and conceiving consciousness we notice the inward pressure toward the absolutely truthful cognition of the object, which proves the inherent mental tendency to divine light in our mind. The unreserved adherence to this Divine light is the first character of the virtue of this mental tendency.

The soul's affinity to God commands this holy adherence as the one source of the inward knowledge of God and our participation in His holiest Life. The soul's affiliation with God demands this holy adherence, as the supreme condition of understanding the perfect ways of God, in order to insure our relatively perfect cooperation with His holiest Life. The soul's imitation of God affirms this holy adherence, for, by virtue of

this affirmation, the mutual affirmation of God and the soul is accomplished and our divine childship established and proved.

Thus, to the virtuous soul, adherence to Divine light is the focus of mental lucidity and the source of infallible intelligibility. The eternal rays of Divine Truth, deriving from the Divine Attributes, cast their light on the soul's intellect and cause it to see not only the surrounding light of all things, but also of its own essence. Then the whole creation is the surrounding light, and the vision of the soul's essence the inward light, defining the soul's origin, dignity, power and obligation. The humble soul embraces this inward light with all his power, because it makes clear to him his creational position of divine childship, because it gives him the power of highest understanding, and because it enables him to realize his life in truth.

The standpoint of his mental visions is the Light of God. Everything he sees is conceived from this eternal apex of view, which towers above all other visions. It is the standpoint of the seraphim who sees without shadow and without disconnection. As the Light of God streams from His ineffable Holiness to replete everything that voluntarily adheres to Divine grandeurs, thus all the powers of vision of the virtuous soul are broadly open to receive enlightening rays of God's Holiness.

Adherence to Divine Light extends the power of

mind to the sublimest capacity. Not only does it permit but it impels the soul to conceive each object in its profoundest worth and order. The Light of God is the definable might of absoluteness and, consequently, the profoundest criterion of all thoughts. God is the absolute definer of truth, therefore all other standards of human visions lack truthful authority and constancy; they shift according to the vacillating moods of human sentiments.

Through Divine Light the dominion of Holiness, Truth and Love is revealed, and, by virtue of this revelation, the total creation is seen in the state of holy relation to and dependence from God. In this holy relation Divine Light demands the positive knowledge of all our spiritual contacts, which is an obvious demand of the eternal might of Divine Truth. This is the answer to the subjectivistic crux of logic which, owing to the lack of conscience as the ground and criterion, is always blind to the objective might of Divine Light.

Logic, in its essence, has objective power and, consequently, constitutes a concrete and real science and not a mere abstract rule of a subjectivistically entangled mind. Though logic chiefly involves the mind, it also affects the will and the heart. The will must endeavor and sentiments must desire to be consistent and logical, in order that we may see and feel the great importance and necessity of applying mental categories to all our judgments. For this reason the humble soul searches

faithfully, devoutly and gratefully for this holy light in his God-given conscience, that he find its blessing guidance.

In the adherence of the mind to Divine Light, all is inspiring brightness, which enlightens humility and assures us of the virtuous distinctness of the deeds of love. Deeds of pure love, of immovable righteousness and all-moving goodness, are permeated and surrounded by the holy brilliance of Divine Light. All virtues shine with perfect order and enduring lucidity and each virtue unfolds its untarnished lustre of heavenly splendor. Thus the virtue of adherence to the Light of God inspires and absorbs the intellect of the faithful child of God.

If Divine Truth is not our absolute light, then there remains but one alternative, our own independently shifting intellect. This is precisely the subjectivistic viewpoint, which ultimately means that everybody's idea may be right or wrong, as anyone pleases. This totally unintelligent and unprincipled standpoint endeavors to eliminate objective truth, which constitutes the supreme importance and the sole sense of truth.

No! Truth is not a subjective property of the soul, even of the highest souls in heaven, but the eternal Light of God. Truth is superessentially holy, and the one who does not realize this obvious fact within himself has no logical right to enter the profound field of religion and philosophy. Truth is not a toy of intel-

lectual pleasures, but a divine object of love and wonder.

Truth is the second paramount object of love, the first being holiness, and the one who has not the great power of the heart to love truth for its own sake is in want of the most important motive and ability to present it. "It is not everybody's matter to speak of religion," rightly observes Schleiermacher. And yet we must not wonder that so many serious authors have failed in their attempts to bring greater light on this ever-pressing subject.

The tendency to Divine Light is in us; it is inherent in each soul, learned, intelligent or uneducated. But where is it in us? Is it only in the intellect? The average intellect is so crowded with common, trivial and often foolish thoughts that there seems to be hardly any room for such serious meditation. Is the sentiment at times not affected and the will not moved by the tendency to Divine Light? Is there any righteous and serious man who knows nothing or wants to know nothing of God? Where is the contact-point of this tendency in the soul? *In conscience*, for it is conscience which animates and inspires the will, intellect and sentiment to see the Light of God. But it is not so much the will, intellect and sentiment in their activities, as the self-conscious and self-sentient motor of the will in its inwardness which is animated by conscience. And it is only our inattention to this inward-

ness which accounts for the seeming indistinctness of this holy animation. Where conscience is not held in the highest esteem and love there is no vivid perception of this animation and, consequently, no spiritual awakening and progress can follow.

Only constant solicitude for the sublimest conscience as our highest treasure of life makes this tendency to Divine Light a virtue. Then all serious questions are not only answered, but all the questioned objects present themselves in adorable distinctness and harmony.

ATTENTION TO THE VOICE OF GOD

Adherence to Divine Light is the beginning of the conscious will in respect to holy perceiving and sensing of its cooperative affiliation with God. We may call it a waking conscience. Attention to the Voice of God is the inward solicitude of the faithful, strong and grateful will for heeding its guiding might.

Be the scope of thinking ever so great or ever so little, no true and concrete concept is attainable without heeding the might of the Voice of God, for at the bottom of all conceivableness lies conscience, the sole might and measure of estimation. Were we deprived of this guiding might, our life would end in chaos, as is proved in the ever-recurring confusion whenever conscience is not heeded by us.

The whole power of truth in us lies in the power of our faithful, strong and grateful heeding of the Voice of God. The Voice of God is the absolute demand and the most formal and formidable law of our life. All other laws adhere to its spirit and, according to greater or less adherence to its super-spiritual might, attain Divine blessing.

All constructive efforts for the betterment of human relations, whether religious, national or social, issue

from the spirit of conscience, and all human misery is wrought by the criminal disregard of this holy spirit.

All virtuous initiatives and truthful estimation derive from conscience. Neither the metaphysician nor the physicist is able to construct a single true premise or deduct a single true conclusion without conscience. The obstinate assertion that mental labor is the exclusive task of reason is one of the many mental superficialities with which humanity is reduced to mental and sentimental confusion and inefficiency.

Reason is only subjective spiritual labor capable of presenting objective values. Of itself it has no objective power and it does not and cannot give values. Its power consists in reasoning according to values. Were it not for conscience, which always insists on values, reasoning itself would be impossible.

To reason essentially means to search for values, which is a mere subjective process. Where there are no values reason loses its power of application; there is nothing worthy to reason about.

Everything lives on the created superspiritual, spiritual and natural substances of which consists the whole being.

Since superspirituality constitutes the dominating might of God, as clearly seen in conscience, the attention to the Voice of God must be the dominating force of the soul's reason.

The soul, as a relative being, must have super-

spiritual light for its intellect in order to see and be able to prove its divine destiny. All worthy aspirations and deeds, all mental elevation and sacrificial sentiments manifest this fact, and equally manifest is the lack of due solicitude for conscience in all ungodly striving.

Looking upward from our lowest stages of life, we perceive an occasional flash of Divine Light, which reminds us that we still are the children of God. Following this holy Light with consecrated interest, our wretchedness begins to lessen and noticeable security and strength enter our hearts.. According to the power of our attention to the holy Voice, depends the duration of its holy visit. Following intensely, we gain the love of virtues and, with this love, the true dignity and the light and love of God, which alone afford spiritual resuscitation, regeneration and salvation.

Moving onward with the leading Voice of God, our visions become clearer, weightier, sublimer and more consistent. With this uplift of the intellect, we begin to gather and understand the most momentous facts of life; we scrutinize them with the aid of conscience and consolidate them into a theory of our inward experience. The sublimer the soul's inward experience, the greater is its theory. Nothing of intrinsic worth is omitted. All manifestations of the Divine Superspirit are carefully noted, their inter-

relations fathomed and the results posited, and followed.

Only souls whose attention to the Voice of God is intense, are able to explore the immense worth of life. Religious convictions, criterions of thought, recognition of temporal authority and rules of life, they all depend on conscience, the supreme authority of judgment and the holy guide to the just order of life.

The continuous consultation of the intellect with conscience constitutes the formidable might of righteous judgment. The metaphysician, as well as the everyday practical man, sees and feels the necessity for this consultation, the former to construct on absolute ground the intellectual architecture of ideas, according to the gradation of objective values, and the latter to fulfill a generally honorable life.

Mental attention to the Voice of God is the lawful state of our self-consciousness, the living contact of our mind with the Light of God, without which contact the leadership of truth cannot exert its full might. The transcendent ground of our intellect is Divine Truth, and, consequently, it must not only be outwardly recognized but inwardly heeded as the sole light of life.

In this determination consists the virtue of our mind; for it evolves the concreteness of truth within ourselves and imparts logical power, which reflects absoluteness. Owing to the lack of this attentive determination to

conscience in our mental efforts, the profoundest objects of life appear abstract. And why? Because they are abstracted by us from the concrete basis of conscience, which alone makes the idea of God an absolutely living fact.

The most conspicuous abstract is the unvirtuous soul. He not only abstracts himself from God, but also from the noblest relations of men. He may, as he so often does, acknowledge the existence of God, but God needs no acknowledgment of His existence; it is the soul which needs the holy acknowledgment of God that it be worthy and truthful.

Attention to conscience is the rising process of the innate tendency to the Light of God within the very principle of the intellect, which is self-consciousness. This rising process proceeds by virtue of inward determination to truth. Without this determination even the most capacious mind cannot become lucid with respect to the knowledge of the first principles of life. Hence, a religion which does not shine with the full power and order of truth is a poor religion, and is bound to be deficient, erroneous and often injurious to virtuous endeavors.

CLEAVING TO CONSCIENCE

As affinity to God demands adherence of our mind to Divine light, and affiliation with God constant attention of our mind to His holy Voice, thus imitation of Divine Life demands the most inward cleaving to and most intense embrace of the Voice of God.

Cleaving to conscience is more than the willingness to hearken to the eternal Voice, or to possess faith in and obedience to its heavenly call; it is a pious abandon to this holy Voice, with profoundest gratitude.

The most expressive distinction of divine childship consists in the love of the Voice of God, for guidance, light, attraction and fruition of virtuous life flow from this Divine Voice.

There is no guide like God and no voice like His. Even in the most intimate state of friendship, none is so near to the soul as God. Indeed, it is the nearness of God on which true, lasting and blessing friendship is built. Neither in heaven nor on earth, can anything be relied on with such implicit trust as the Voice of our Heavenly Father.

It is God's holy Voice that binds our soul to Him, and, struggle as we will to free ourselves from this Voice, we cannot do it. The bond is there as the

supreme fact of our life and is so manifest in each soul that its universality awes and uplifts us more than all other facts of life.

The voice of God is the everlasting joy of heavenly spirits, the invincible stronghold of the virtuous, the constant aspiration of the weak, the true consolation of the suffering and the just torment of the wicked. In these facts Divine Fatherhood reveals its eternal dominion, splendor, attraction, compassion and rigor.

The actual revelation of God as our eternal Father, our most inward relation to Him, the reason of our spiritual dignity, the necessity of a great virtuous life and the constant longing for great immortal life, all these are centered in conscience.

Nowhere can truth be better ascertained than at the fount of its life. The Voice of God is the Voice of this eternal fount, and hence is the living oracle. Here each question, from the greatest to the least significant, finds its correct answer. The searcher for God finds the living and speaking God. Pure love finds generous reciprocity; the weary intellect, the profoundest support and highest animation; the longing heart, its stronghold and rest; the praying soul, abundant assistance, and the sufferer true consolation.

Pure reason as well as pure life center in conscience. All great thoughts of men thrust out like rays from the focus of inward light installed by the Superspirit of God. Here the flame of intellect burns the bright-

est. All mental concepts are visions of the infinity of Divine Grandeurs, which, like eternal beams of might, hold the immensities of worlds in their embrace. Here Holiness is the holiest principle of all principles, Truth the holiest process of all processes, and Love the holiest effect of all effects. And this superessential trinity of the Divine might transcendently permeates the infinite grandeur of Divine Creation and clearly reflects in each soul and in each act and fact of virtuous life.

Nothing is simpler than holy determination, holy truth and holy love, in their absolute and relative aspects. They are the essential content of religion, the highest goal of philosophy and the paramount sum and substance of life. The Voice of God reveals and proclaims them as the highest and best in existence, and calls on all souls for their willing affirmation. This affirmation consists of faith, devotion and gratitude, which are the determining powers for participating in the glory, might and eternity of God.

For this reason the virtuous soul cleaves to conscience with awe-inspiring immovableness. Whether in joy or sadness, in bliss or suffering, he follows the Voice of God, his sole guide, stronghold and salvation. To this Voice he binds all forces of his soul in profoundest piety and most inward abandon.

Conscience is the sublime dwelling of the virtuous soul. Herein he lives, works and rejoices. There is

nothing that supersedes or equals conscience, for it is the living bond with God, the divine form of sanctification, the animator of sublimest motives and the inexhaustible source of beatifying love.

The virtuous soul cleaves to conscience more than to his own life, because he adores and esteems it more than his own life. Conscience is the sanctifying breath of Divinity and the ruling might in creation. It is the formal Will of God, according to which the soul is formed, and every deviation from its spirit causes spiritual deformity of the human character. Take away conscience from the soul and we would have an evolution that would be satanic.

What would the will be that did not cleave to conscience? A monster of wickedness. What would the mind be without conscience? A deceiver and liar. And how would the heart appear without conscience? Like a devouring hell.

Conscience is not a mere practical expedient of human relations, as so many superficial thinkers assert. Conscience is the divine ground of the soul, and the most inward law of God, which suffers no pretense, no falsehood and no dishonor. It is more! Conscience demands that each soul be virtuous, and its demand is so palpable and insistent that none has spiritual power and peace unless this demand is fulfilled.

From the abyss of sins, saints have risen by virtue

of conscience. Through conscience prophets were born. Through conscience, the steps of history furnish records of betterment. Every duty of love and contract is accepted and bound by conscience. The whole inward and outward order of men stands and lives on conscience. Consequently, the cleaving to conscience is the supreme necessity of the soul and none realizes this necessity so much as the virtuous man, who, through the realization of this cleaving, attains his virtuous character. In conscience he finds the law of all laws and the eternal Light of God.

THE VIRTUE OF WISDOM

The virtue of the mental tendency to God pertains to the general mentality of the self-conscious and self-sentient will, through which tendency the fact that conscience is the real basis of true cognoscibility and virtuous discrimination is made clear; while the virtue of wisdom pertains to the application of each particular force of the soul to conscience. Hence the particular *application of the will, intellect and sentiment to conscience* constitutes the virtue of wisdom and, at the same time, denotes its intrinsic characters.

APPLICATION OF WILL TO CONSCIENCE

To apply our will to conscience means to follow faithfully the leadership of the Voice of God. It is consistent and wise that the soul's voluntary forces should follow the absolute determination of God, because the holy origin of our spiritual forces is God.

Moreover, God is our eternal prototype. His Holiness, Truth and Love constitute the clear and tangible prototype of our life. From this holiest prototype the free will, the intellect and sentiment are derived, that the soul may be the immortal witness of its holy origin and the participator in holy destiny.

The soul, as such, is the immortal testimony of Divine grandeurs. Its relative spiritual structure corresponds with, and, in the depth of its inwardness, responds to the Divine grandeurs. Even the most wicked soul either appeals to or cowers before the Holiness, Truth and Love of God.

Conscience is the eternal reflex and the eternally resounding Voice of Divine grandeurs. It proclaims our affinity to God and our participation in His holiest Life. It ordains our affiliation with God, and our cooperation with His holiest Life and it summons us

to follow God, in order to affirm God in us and ourselves in Him.

No man can be profoundly or seriously religious unless he feels, sees and accepts this transcendent bond and actual contact of the soul with God. Our faith in God arises from this holy bond and without this faith no wise act can be performed.

All wise acts are accomplished through the living faith in God, and human deeds, so various in their context and so weak in true nobility, are a distinct proof of the lack of this living faith. Where a relative being is detached from the absolute Object of truth, no great and sincere application to the wisdom of acts is possible. There is neither the ground, nor the incentive for great, wise acts. All that remains in such a state of mentality is the application of the will to exaggerated cautiousness, which practically means, to do, to think, and to feel as little as possible in order not to be involved in any exertion of sacrificial deeds and thinking.

Sacrificial deeds have their source in fortitude, the real heroism of the faith in God. This heroism requires heroic thinking in order to produce wise acts. Wisdom without the fortitude of a profoundly religious character is impossible. The determination to think wisely always precedes the thinking act. And how can one think wisely without the assurance and acceptance of the living object of wisdom?

The sole object of wisdom is to see the highest and grandest values of life in order to realize them in oneself. The highest value of our life is sanctification, the free proof of our divine childship, wherein all the forces of our soul reach the full development for the association with God, with His eternal majesty, creative might and His inspiring and adorable sacrifice.

This heavenly life is the life for the sake of which God gives and demands wisdom, that our whole determination be applied to it in order to live according to His holy likeness. Great and superhuman as this divine demand is, it is attainable to some degree even in our little human souls. Each soul has a feeling and longing for the elevation and expansion of its conscience, the God-given bond and the holy warrant of its honor and righteousness.

For this reason the virtuous soul applies his determination principally to conscience. The Voice of God calls incessantly for this holy application. It is the supreme call to all great endeavors. It dwells under and permeates the whole self-consciousness and self-sentiency of the will and urges to the fulfillment of highest dignity.

The highly virtuous soul continually applies his will to the Will of God. In the self-consciousness of his glorious childship he sees the Divine Might holding and leading him. In his faith he follows them step by step. He sees in his devotion that he could not

live without Divine guidance, because he would have to live without gratitude, a spiritual power of mutuality without which it is impossible for the virtuous soul to exist.

Owing to the nearness to and tangibility of the mighty of God, this holy following of the Divine Will fills the soul with a spiritual force which surpasses all conceptions of the less virtuous and baffles and humiliates the proud. Neither slander nor persecution cause the virtuous soul to deviate from his sublime course. Though he does not invite suffering, he is always ready to bear it, and never avoids it when called upon to fulfill a divine duty. The wisdom of these deeds is proved by the invincibility and the ultimate triumph of great souls over iniquity.

To follow the Voice of God is to be in company with the Divine Superspirit. His almighty transcendence carries the faithful soul over all obstacles in his upward course. The wise in spirit readily endures privations for the sake of hastening his virtuous rise. No delay is tolerated. It must be accomplished, therefore it should begin at once. No action is so pressing and no thought so wise as the attainment of virtues, and the greater the inward energy the faster the progress.

This is not impatience, as some who care more for earthly comfort and common respectability, superficially assume. It is the intensity of the will to achieve

what is supremely wise; the applying of *all* energy to the following of the Voice of God, the intensest Voice of all voices.

All great deeds are results of intense action. A whole-souled action means an action in its fullest capacity. The Voice of God is the eternal Voice of His holy Superspirit, which affects not only the depth and height but the whole content of the soul. Therefore, the soul's answer must be whole-souled, which means to the utmost capacity of its volition. Even in our own little life, half-souled deeds are not very acceptable.

Life in holiness is supremely intense. Each virtue is an expression of this holy intensity, and it is for this reason that it is so difficult for the sinful to attain virtue. It requires a will of great power to become virtuous, but this power must be applied, for we are predestined to live a superhuman life. Death proves it. We should never part from this abode were it not for the necessity of a higher life.

The virtue of wisdom is the school of true consciousness. Here the soul is taught to perceive and conceive everything in the light of a holy and glorious life. It is taught the necessity of glorious life through holy faith, devotion and gratitude, the relative prototype of all glory. It is taught the necessity of submitting the whole complex of consciousness to the self-consciousness of the will, where the contact with con-

science is the nearest. All consciousness must be directed wisely in order to obtain virtuous results. Consciousness without conscience is inconcrete, and can be, as it often is, employed for unworthy motives and deeds. According to the spiritual law consciousness is ruled by the self-conscious will, and the self-conscious will is ruled by conscience.

No great and wise act issues from the mere power of the will; it receives its sanction and glory from the strict application of the will's power to the Will of God. God is first, superessentially, transcendently, super-entitatively and actually; therefore also His glorious sanction is first. It derives from the intimacy of His eternal glory, which, like a holy fire, permeates conscience, that the erring soul may not forget the grandeur and inward sense of glory. Glory is the transcendent property of God, therefore God bestows the sublimest participation in glory on those who intensely and wisely apply their will to His holiest Will.

APPLICATION OF THE INTELLECT TO CONSCIENCE

The self-conscious and self-sentient will is the first factor as regards the application to conscience. Its activity consists in the continuous endeavor to face conscience. This endeavor constitutes the first and most intimate act of wisdom, because it concerns the very essence of the soul.

The intellect, being only a general consciousness of all things, and having its basis in the self-consciousness of the will as the source of all interest, is the second factor as regards the application to conscience, and, therefore, constitutes the concomitant and processive application to conscience. Endeavor for consciousness always precedes the act of consciousness. For this reason, not consciousness but the self-conscious will is the responsible factor for all deeds.

Consequently, the self-conscious will is not only responsible for all its deeds, but also for its consciousness by which means the deed is performed. This proves the necessity for the utmost seriousness in attaining the right consciousness in order to fulfill wisely the task of worthy life.

This seriousness is tested in our mental dispositions

and mental complex. The quality of the complex of individual ideas invariably proves the quality of man's character. His consciousness always dwells in what he strives for or what is dear to his heart. The word is the sound of his thought and the thought is the processive form of his character, which means the presentation of his self-conscious and self-sentient will and the whole make-up of his spiritual being.

Intellect is the spiritual means of cognoscibility of the values of life and the criterion of values lies in conscience. Consequently, the application of the intellect to conscience constitutes the paramount necessity of right understanding. This application constitutes the mental virtue of seeing the profoundest reason of our own life as well as of all life around us. It demonstrates the eternal object of superspirituality as well as our own corresponding spiritual forces, intrinsically adhering to the superspiritual life of God.

This demonstration is not a casual, external demonstration, but a continuous inward demonstration of our unalterable dependence from God. Whenever and wherever our intellect reaches out, ever and anon there is the presentation of the might of Divinity, immovable, solemn and full of insisting interest.

The virtuous soul, studying God within his conscience, sees the ineffable grandeur and harmony of Divine mights and the sacrificial gift of divine participation in this Divine grandeur and harmony. Owing

to constant application of his intellect to conscience, he sees under its light the nascent and growing virtues, surrounding the soul with a divine atmosphere and thus imparting a power of self-consciousness and self-sentiency to the will which is invincible. He sees the reason of his will-power in the affinity to God and of the affiliation with and imitation of God. At the same time he sees the reason of his clear visions in the constant contemplation of things divine, which is the most important contemplation. Finally, he understands that Truth, being the eternal presentation of Holiness, demands and is worthy of utmost sacrifice, because in itself it is the visual process of all sacrifices. This vision is the sublimest and wisest labor of our intellect, for it offers the highest, the best and the most concretely harmonious views.

The skeptical inclination of the average man is due to the failure to apply his intellect to conscience. If conscience is not heeded with veneration and animation no absolute criterion can exist in our intellect. And without this absolute criterion everything becomes doubtful, mysterious and fatalistic. Where the sacred source of the worthiness, immortal interest and spiritual beauty of our life is obscured, the soul must become haughty and impatient in its will, confused and arrogant in its thinking and depressed and disgruntled in its heart. Then faith, devotion and gratitude to God and

man are displaced by fate, self-devotion and ingratitude.

The absolute criterion is not a mental instrument of human reason, as intellectual affectation under the pretext of philosophy is claiming. It is the dominating power and object of our intellect. Eliminate the objective term "absolute" from our intellect and the concept of truth has neither objective ground nor subjective reason and force. Then all thinking becomes baseless and loses itself in mere relativities.

The virtue of wisdom is the actual course of the criterion of truth in us. Is it absolutely true? This is the first and chief question which confronts each forming concept. Each mental analogy, each constructive synthesis or analytical investigation, and each deduction or induction, indeed, every mental representation, in its motive, in its process and in its effect, must bear witness to the absolute Light of God.

In wisdom, strict application to conscience as the real ground of logic is imperative, and the confounding of real objects with subjective capacities, or causes with effects, is intolerable. Its insistence is felt in all practical endeavors, thoughts and sentiments. But only in the results of our endeavors, thoughts and sentiments are we aware of the logical consequences of the application of the intellect to conscience or the lack of it. Then we know whether we acted wisely or not.

The whole secret of mental power lies in the power

of applying our intellect to conscience. Its source is Divine superspirituality and its predicates are absolute and infallible. No matter how capacious one's knowledge may be, or how brilliant and delightful its presentation, if it does not possess the distinct character of absolute truth, it is soon forgotten. Even the weak human soul is inwardly so spiritually disposed that, while in its light-mindedness it cares little for wisdom and even often derides it, it nevertheless feels its power and ultimately discards everything that has no direct relation to wisdom.

Wisdom pertains but to a few great objects, to God, to conscience, constituting our relation to God, and to the Divine dominion of His creation. In its final issue our whole life and all human sciences are absorbed in these objects. It is only the superficiality of our character which allows infinitely smaller objects to overshadow these great objects of life. Owing to this unwisdom we pay the price of human confusion and disorder. Where the simplest and profoundest objects of knowledge are not solicitously heeded, we cannot see the light of the clear road of our destiny and are bound to lose our way.

Wisdom demands the strictest application of our intellect to conscience. Our thinking in all instances is either virtuous or unvirtuous. The right and the wrong, whether in theoretical or practical thinking, depends on the extent of the application of our intellect

to the Voice of God. Understanding pertains exclusively to truth, and to truth in all its sublimity. Only the frivolous mind juggles with thoughts. Each correct thought is a definition of holy reality, and in the correctness of definition consists the intellectual wisdom of the virtuous. For this reason, every deviation from truth is dishonoring and painful and every falsehood or distortion is abhorrent to the virtuous.

In wisdom, each thought has intrinsic worthiness, rightness and strict consistency with holy life. Each definition is lucidly concrete and can be carried by unbroken induction to the absolute ground of truth. Or, in a deductive way, it can be extended to the limit of defining power without losing its clearness and consistency.

In the application of our mind to conscience, not only is it a question of correctness but also of the righteousness of thought. Since each thought contributes its defining portion to righteous deeds, so in itself it must be righteous. No view and no conviction, no matter how strongly rooted in our minds, is righteous unless it is in strict conformity with conscience. Wisdom alters, improves, or, if utterly untrue, eradicates wrong views without the slightest compunction.

Furthermore, the virtue of wisdom requires purity of thought. An unclean motive casts its contaminating shadow on the mind and thus obscures it, making it less able to explain the right and to deny the wrong. Wis-

dom does not prohibit the flights of mental imagination; it only demands that this imagination be pure, and, if pure, it allows it to rise above our common life in order to evoke a more vivid attraction for a virtuous life.

Phantasy is the poetry and artistry of the soul. It eases the rigid logic of life. It assuages mental efforts and crowns them with fruitional delight. Wisdom produces, enhances and guards virtuous imagination in order to make higher realities more attractive and tangible and to affect our sentiments with the desire for virtue. Virtuous imagination clothes pure desires with heavenly vestments and thus causes an elevating influence on the fallen, and brings consolation and hope for final salvation.

APPLICATION OF SENTIMENTS TO CONSCIENCE

Sentiment, being the effective force of our life, demands the sentimental effectiveness of our intellect with respect to wisdom. All our possessions are sentimental possessions. We only possess what we desire and long for. If we speak of possessions by force of determination, it means that the will has decided to appropriate what the sentiment desires. If we speak of intellectual possessions we by no means exclude the sentimental force which prompts the self-conscious and self-sentient will to take hold of them. There is no soul, good or bad, that possesses anything within its character and disposition for which it never had a desiring sentiment.

The lack of application of our will and sentiment to conscience causes the psychological confusion in us, because of which we do not understand ourselves and, consequently, have only a very superficial knowledge of our spiritual forces.

Each man with any pretension to intelligence should know distinctly that his personality consists of his self-conscious and self-sentient will; that his self-consciousness is the ground of his intellect and self-sentiency the ground of his sentiment, that the will is the choosing and deciding factor, and sentiment the prompting and

holding factor of all superspiritual, spiritual and material content. In other words, the determining will is the master of the human personality, his self-consciousness and adhering intellect the comprehending spiritual force, and his self-sentiency the keeping vessel of all his acquisitions, wherein all desires live and wherefrom all longings arise. If I say, "I understand," it means that I have a sufficiently formed concept of the object in question, but I express neither will nor desire for it. If I say, "I am attracted to" a given object, it means, I have only a longing or desire for this object. But if I say, "I want this object," it means that I have decided to attain it.

Since the soul's interest centers in its heart, it is evident that the will does not move to action unless it is attracted or prompted by more or less distinct sentiments which it already possesses. Accordingly, it is also evident how important the cultivation of our sentiments relative to conscience must be in order to attain wisdom, the virtuous rule of our conduct.

Wisdom has been treated almost exclusively from an idealistic standpoint and, in consequence of this onesided presentation, has found little place in our hearts. Although we occasionally delight in wise acts and wise thoughts, they seldom sink deeply into our soul. We lack the appreciation of and gratitude for wise deeds and ideas and, therefore, are so insensitive to its guiding and blessing might.

Where the sentiment of wisdom is not heeded and loved, there is no possibility for any improvement in our social relations, nor is it possible to introduce higher standards in our family relations or contribute anything to the spirit of greater and purer friendship, so necessary for the spread of virtuous life.

The whole practical will, intellect and sentiment are in continuous contact with wisdom. Yet, if the application of sentiment to conscience is not vivid, efficient wisdom cannot be attained. For this reason in all larger complexes of human tendencies and ideas the temporary leaders of humanity are so narrow, helpless and frequently wrong. But what can we expect from men who have no love for the Voice of God? Indeed, for those with little or no love of the virtue of wisdom, the process of right thinking is surpassingly difficult, hence the rambling of the human mind, its lack of constructive ability, its consequent indulgence in vain and unenlightening speculation and criticism, and the proneness to belittle everything except oneself.

The application of sentiments to conscience consists in the love of the Voice of God, which meets and embraces the virtuous heart. In this embrace the heart arrives at its profoundest inwardness. It feels the holy ground from which issues the sacred vessel, and inhales the superspiritual atmosphere which surrounds its life. The will to wisdom is its pulsation and the consciousness of wisdom its brightest flame.

In the love of wisdom, each presentation of the superessential and transcendent might of God is not only understood but also most fervently loved; for to the virtuous each holy presentation in conscience is the highest object of love. Hence the application of all sentiments to the love of wisdom is the distinct characteristic of the intensely virtuous.

Holiness is supreme reality, and, through the forms of its Truth, the participating affinity, cooperating affiliation and affirming imitation of Divine life is conceived and realized. Holiness must be contemplated and followed by both our mind and heart in order to enable us to attain and sustain the love of wisdom.

Wisdom is the power of sublimest knowledge. It transforms the more or less distinct understanding of truth into a living concreteness of light. Here truth not only shines, but warms and kindles the soul to sacrificial and righteous action.

Virtuous action derives from fortitude, but wisdom guides it through the torrent of spiritual activities. Each advance is planned and each step is measured by wisdom. Each thought is considered and reconsidered according to the laws of conscience and each feeling is balanced according to the profundity of Divine Love. Each impurity of motive is eliminated, each falsehood denounced and brought to account before the tribunal of conscience, and every longing of the heart is corrected and directed to God. This

is the life of the love of wisdom, the transcendent Voice of God with regard to truth.

The love of wisdom is extolled by prophets and sages, and its practice is inculcated by mental and sentimental discipline. The power of wisdom is constructive. It is the active repairer of sinful trespasses and the allayer of passionate impulses. It points to the sublimer values of life, holds personal respect in the foreground and dictates respectfulness to the superiority of the lofty character and intellect.

The power of its mutuality causes and enhances friendship, the most precious gem of life, and makes all human contact gentler and more amiable. Everywhere it seeks for the sublimest and best; and when found it adds it to the virtuous power of the will, it employs it for greater enlightenment of the mind and the endearment of every virtuous feeling.

Thus the love of wisdom is the most diligent worker and custodian of the soul's ego. It accelerates the throbs of holy volition, fans the flame of intellect upward to divine vision, and, with this virtuous throbbing and flaming, brings forth the immortal blossom of Divine Love, the love of God, which it embraces and guards with all its might and strength.

An unrestrained desire for truth is the beginning of wisdom, for no great attainment is possible without intense desire. Here lies the secret of the great thinker. He knows that without great love of wisdom no great

thoughts can be conceived and no rise of character accomplished.

The course of wisdom must be followed in order to enable him to arrive at the summit of highest vision. Thus impelled by the inward love of truth, the virtuous man advances at first more by feeling his way than by seeing it, but with each forward step his path becomes clearer and brighter. What formerly appeared only as a distant light, toward which he guided his steps, becomes a broad, bright road, resplendent with harmony and beauty.

Each advancing step heightens his vision and makes his original love profounder. Each virtue becomes more vivid with light, and, according to its sacrificial spirit, provides him with its particular torch of light, that he may not overlook the eternal ground of their power, the mights of God, the holiest attributes of His Divinity. By virtue of this divine equipment, his powers grow to such proportions that they evoke in him the highest admiration for everything divine. The mere glimpses of such visions have produced prophets and great thinkers on this earth.

To the average man the whole power of wisdom is inconceivable. And yet every man knows that a few great ideas will lead large portions of humanity as flocks of little children are led, and cause thrones and institutions sustained by ages to be swept away. What is it that prompts a man to go to suffering and

death, if not the heart's prompting to give up life for a righteous cause, dictated by the love of wisdom?

If one cause be a little better than the opposing cause, it is worth while to die in the struggle for the better cause. This is practical wisdom, flowing from the righteous heart. It is the spark of sacrifice in the human heart, which wants to give proof that it is not wholly debased, and that it is fit for a greater and sublimer life in the hereafter. For into the great beyond above us only those can enter who have prepared themselves for a life of greater sacrifices.

Wisdom, like all other virtues, is intrinsically sacrificial, and the one who in greater or less degree attains wisdom, imparts it freely to his earthly brethren. Nothing is more conspicuous in our life than the need of great counsel, and if all counsels were wise they would be more generally heeded. Great disciples have clung to their great teachers and thus they became wiser, better and nobler, for the love of wisdom was the prompting of their hearts.

But the love of wisdom exacts a great free heart and must suffer no impediments from ruling passions. The realization of truth is its sole object and purpose. All shadows must vanish, all mysteries must be solved, all intricacies untwined and all perplexities cleared away, that the light of God become the holy light of our own life. None enters heavenly spheres without the complete attainment of divine truth and wisdom.

THE VIRTUE OF SIMPLICITY

Simplicity is the last and most effective mental virtue of the soul. Owing to this effectiveness religious authors have had great difficulty in defining the essence of this great virtue. Apparently simplicity affects the will, the intellect and the sentiment with equal power, but its essence consists in the veraciousness of the will, intellect and sentiment. We do not say Holiness and Love are simple, but we say Truth is simple, which means that it is self-evident; it is the essence of evidence.

Accordingly, the virtue of simplicity is the real evidence and definition of the virtuous soul. Through this virtue the whole attitude of the soul is seen in its true light, as before the Face of God. It is for this very reason that characters with little or no simplicity are for most men so difficult to understand and to estimate. Moreover, such characters do not know themselves and in fear of becoming known by others, live on affectation, simulation and speciousness.

Simplicity is the true manifestation of inward characteristics. It never misrepresents, conceals or simulates. Its veracity is as calm and unassuming as it

is striking. It reveals the unreserved reliance on conscience, the divine witness in us. Either in our inward motives or external transactions we are in the presence of this divine witness which we cannot escape even in our sinful or criminal actions. As it calmly invites the virtuous soul to reveal his inward possession of divine truth thus it presses the inwardness of the sinner to testify to his own guilt. Self-confession is an affirmation of truth.

The virtuous soul has nothing to conceal and is like an open book from which everybody can read plainly. If he uses discretion, it is only out of regard for others. He knows the presumptuous moods of man and avoids them in order not to cause misunderstanding. Everywhere he guards the spiritual sense of virtuous honor and holds it before his eyes and in his heart. This honor is his intimate treasure, profound delight and the true competence of inward life.

The virtue of simplicity imparts this spiritual competence through its three distinct characters: *sincerity of will*, *veracity of mind* and *modesty of attitude*.

SINCERITY OF WILL

Sincerity of will is primarily the norm of good motives and actions. Its source lies in humility and its course in fortitude and wisdom. It manifests the ready willingness to serve every worthy cause and its importance consists in the faithful execution of all voluntary powers for the Highest Good.

Sincerity affirms and expresses humility, for, inwardly aware of its affinity to God, it cannot manifest itself in any other way than through a good will. It abides by the virtue of faith, because it is conscious that only faith in the Supreme Good supports the good will. It thrives on devotion to God, for devoutness is the essential provider of Divine love and of eternal fruition. In itself it is the meekest expression of gratitude, for without conditions it offers its whole-souled service.

Sincerity is fortitude realized. Here fortitude is no longer a burning energy, but a calm, steady and constant offering of this virtuous energy, the unruffled flow of perseverance. Once its aim is accomplished, it utters no words of triumph, but rejoices in inward quietude. Invariably secure and peaceful, all its utterances are full of innocence and meekness. It assumes no adornment or artifice.

Ever conscious of our childship to God, the highest soul sincerely approaches the lowest, as its equal by right and by duty, though not by earned elevation. "Take this, my friend, for I am able and happy to serve thee," is the spirit of true sincerity. Sincerity never waits to be asked, but rather searches for the opportunity to manifest its good will, and often insists on this manifestation. The good will wants to be effectual, therefore sincerity employs all its power of persuasion to accomplish its purpose, a result so necessary in our life of suffering and tribulation.

Sincerity is the most powerful builder and the main condition of friendship. Here no motive is hidden and no thought concealed. The heart is open as a sacred book. All its offerings are simple, unostentatious, as between brothers, but true, profound and powerful; true, because sincerity is the voluntary expression of divine truth, and profound and powerful because it inculcates faith, devotion and gratitude in the heart, the most vital trinity of our life. Moreover, it confirms and increases fortitude and evokes blessing.

The sincere will is guided by Divine Light and the sincere motive is riveted on its sublimest focus, the eternal Superspirit of God. Truth is the object of the good will's endeavor and on this endeavor the truth of God casts its heavenly ray, that the soul may see and realize the harmony with God, with oneself and with our fellow-beings.

The attention and cleaving to the voice of God is the moving power of sincerity, which dwells in the intense application of the will to conscience and according to conscience it interprets all its movements and motives.

In this interpretation consists the sincerity of the will, which is determined to express in its self-consciousness, as well as in all its mental concepts, its consistence with the might of truth. If it fails in this effort, its mental concepts will lack self-evidence, the indispensable condition of self-understanding. No object and purpose can be understood clearly if self-understanding is not clear in the motor, movement and motive of the will.

The virtuous man knows and feels this condition and necessity within his inwardness, and with all the power of his determination he endeavors to attain the unerring standpoint of self-interpretation, through the intense sincerity of the will, in which spiritual competence consists.

Truth is as intimately related to Holiness as is light to fire, and therefore it casts its rays on no soul in which there is no burning spark for holiness. The endeavor for holiness must be burning sincerely in order to attract the rays of truth and be encompassed by them.

The life of superhuman souls is luminous with sincerity and every manifestation of their volition is transparently bright. Truthfulness of will is the splendor

of their personal glory, might and beatitude. Undeceived and undeceiving is their progress through the spheres of eternity. They are God-like, for thus God wants them to be.

Looking negatively at this subject we notice that unreliability among men is as broad as the surface of the earth. This constantly disturbing factor exists in all our human relations. If it is conceded to anti-religionists that religion is an individual matter, there is all the more reason to make religion not only a social and national task, but a task of the whole humanity, because humanity, in its social and national structure, consists of individuals. It is strange how, in the pantheistic or naturalistic mind, the personal interest becomes alive in spite of the pretense of disbelief in the personality of the soul. Surely, for anyone who does not accept the Voice of God as the ruling might, it does not matter what we really are and what we are conscience-bound to do.

In all our human contacts we demand and rely on the sincere expression of the human will. The whole competence of all worthy achievements depends on this voluntary character of simplicity. It is a spiritual power which each man must take into account and which he so longingly expects from everybody.

Unfortunately, owing to the low state of conscience in mankind, sincerity is a peculiar stranger among men. In any relation we may consider, international, national,

denominational, social, family or personal relation, the main obstruction to mutual understanding is the lack of sincerity, the lack of good will, the lack of truthfulness of motives and, consequently, the lack of the spiritual competence for order and mutuality.

It is patent, that if we omit one virtue or even one character of any virtue in our life, the structure of our human tendencies becomes insecure and always ready to fall asunder. There cannot be any true progress and stability in the good motives of men until greater efforts are made for the cultivation of the sincerity of the human will. And this cultivation can be achieved only by a profounder insight into and love for the Voice of God in us.

VERACITY OF MIND

As the will follows the urgency of conscience by virtue of sincerity, thus the mind attains its clearness by virtue of veracity. The mind's intrinsic purpose consists in its truthful adherence to Divine Light. This means not only that the mind's formal capacity is for the purpose of obtaining truthful results, but also that all the processes of its perceiving and conceiving efforts must be essentially truthful.

Truth is the holy aim and rule of our cognitive forces. Hence, any deviation from it causes the monstrosity of falsehood. Truth is holy and glows with simplicity. Its distinctness is as clear and convincing as its might is sublime and binding. Its statements are based on immovable absoluteness, which endows the truthful mind with heavenly power. Its might consists in the adherence to Absolute Truth, by which each object of concept is presented in its true light. It permits no willful extension or restriction of definition, and denounces all untrue interpretations.

Veracity is the most exacting motive of the will pertaining to truth, as well as the most exacting labor of the mind. Consequently, a great statement of truth is a holy mark of great worthiness.

In all our mental endeavors, conscience is the holy reflector of truth. Any object to be known and any judgment to be passed must undergo the scrutiny of conscience. It demands that every defect of mental conception be corrected and every indistinctness removed. The scrutinized object must stand in its own light, as the Truth of God defines it, without anthropomorphic or subjectivistic adornment or other alteration.

Truthfulness is practical lucidity; a virtue absolutely necessary for all knowledge, including self-knowledge. An intense truthfulness is necessary to understand God and ourselves as well as our relation to God and our fellow beings. The lack of it causes untold deceptions.

The assertion of our affinity to, affiliation with and imitation of God may sound to many rather poetical or merely sentimental. Yet its veracity remains incontrovertible, for God creates no voluntary, conscious and sentimental being which does not possess a relative affinity to Him, which cannot affiliate with Him and which cannot imitate His holiest Life. His Perfection demands it, His Almightyness is potent to cause it, His sacrificial Love desires it and His Truth proves it.

This holy fact is the cause of the truthfulness of humility toward our heavenly Father. Therefore, our faith, our devotion and our gratitude must, before all, be truthful to Him. All our human relations are a sequence of this first and great revelation. A life without faith, devotion and gratitude would be not only

unbearable but unthinkable. It would be worse than hell, for even in the lowest stages of animal life, distant signs of this great life are noticeable.

The life of religion is a life of distinct veracity and the one who is not permeated with veracity to the depth of his heart is far from being truly religious. The professed atheist who possesses due righteous insight and truthfulness, as he often does, especially in practical matters, has far more religion in his heart than the execrable hypocrite. Pietism, when it endeavors to incline our hearts to God, and neglects the all-important factor of truthfulness, bears little and often very sickly fruit in religion. Sacraments are of no avail unless they have the distinct mark of divine veracity.

The veracity of sacramental life lies in virtues, for virtues are the holy outflow of the holiest attributes of God, the witness-bearer of our divine childship and the proof of the eternal Fatherhood of God. Virtues are the holy bond of our life with the Life of God in a relation which is most intimate and sacramental. Each virtuous soul will testify to this fact and joyfully seal the veracity of this fact with his life. All martyrdoms are achieved by virtue of the veraciousness of the inward sacramentality of our life.

Owing to its veracity, the life of conscience is the truly sacramental life. Here God speaks directly to the soul and each virtuous soul answers directly with its whole and open heart. Only the false soul closes

its ears, pleads impotence, cowers in fear and does not dare to disclose the inwardness of its being.

The average human soul, having little adoration and love of truth, except as an instrument for personal advantage, cannot be anything else but unveracious. Hence, it juggles with its thoughts as with something unimportant and never sees the path of life clearly.

Where there is no profound inward esteem and love of conscience, veracity of mind and character are impossible. All the crimes of fanaticism, of political perversions and of social and personal abuses are ascribable to this fact mainly. Where the might of divine simplicity is not present the duplicity of human passions must have their full sway. Then everything can be perverted and twisted until the very soul becomes a caricature of its original divine design.

Our whole memory must be concentrated on the one fact that our mind is made for truth and that truth is holy, sacramental and simple; that each thought is a representation of truth or of falsehood.

Truthfulness is the conquering weapon of fortitude; the fiery sword that never fails. The soul needs no other weapon, either for attack or for defense. A truthful word is all-sufficient, for it is the earnest witness bearer to the ultimate and infallible judgment of God. The face of the truthful man is as frank as it is unyielding; frank, because truth shines in his countenance,

and unyielding, because of his unconquerable power of cleaving to the Voice of God.

Holiness, love and all great virtues radiate with truthfulness. Its inherent genuineness tests every endeavor, every thought and every sentiment with strictest scrutiny. Even in solitude, there is no hiding from its might. The veracity of conscience never fails in its sublime reproach whenever the soul fails to maintain the great dignity bestowed on it by God.

No worthy relations are possible without the strictest truthfulness. All transactions depend upon it. Its very simplicity makes its demand obvious and imperative. It affects our inwardness as well as our external actions. Consequently, only consummate truthfulness brings security, peace and blessedness. A good will, a straight mind and a pure open heart are all that truthfulness demands.

MODESTY OF ATTITUDE

The final character of the virtue of simplicity is modesty of attitude. Sincerity of will and truthfulness of mind cause the inward attitude and outward demeanor which mark the soul as the true child of God. Inward attitude is the manifestation of personal dispositions and motives, and its modesty derives from the state of absolute dependency from God.

The soul has no dignity through independent volition, but only through participation in the majestic Might of God; therefore, its veracious attitude is modesty, the highest spiritual refinement. All virtues maintain this spirit, for they are only the relative reflexes of the eternal magnificence of Divine Attributes. Thus, the more potent the soul is in virtues, the more modest is its inner attitude and its outward demeanor. It is humility symbolized.

Affinity to and affiliation with God causes exaltation, but this exaltation is profound and modest. Faith is the humble and modest leaning on Divine might. Devotion to God is meek and modest abandon to the eternal perfections of God, and gratitude the sweetest and most modest obligation to the love of God.

All virtuous energy, perseverance and triumph bears the mark of modesty. There is no such thing as boastfulness of fortitude. Fortitude is firm but never boisterous. Even blissfulness, with its security, peace and joy, is permeated with modesty. There is no wildness in true joyousness.

The adhering mind to Divine Light is a profound but modestly adhering mind. Truth does not hear our willful command. Its holy spirit demands that we reach out for it intensely, but with a modest attitude of soul. Attention and cleaving to the eternal Voice of God is an act of intrinsic modesty.

Thus the highly virtuous soul is the living fact of simplicity, the last expression of his self-conscious inwardness. He pretends nothing, he arrogates nothing and affects nothing. Everything that constitutes his profound character manifests itself by its own power.

Unmindful of the perversity and misjudgment of our sinful world, he bides his time till the final judgment. He adds no fuel to the vortex of passions nor does he seek vainly to impress the unworthy. In his contact with men he affects no proud apathetic equanimity or imperturbability, but is actuated by the beautiful and patient spirit of modesty, which is the possession of the truly virtuous.

Living in the midst of guile and hypocrisy, he knows the treachery and trickery of human passions, and, if a simple protest does not suffice, he gives time to his

assailants until their consciences are struck by God. He is filled with compassion for his enemies, for he is conscious that the account of their deeds will be very painful before the tribunal of Divine Justice. Hence, he never calls upon the Lord to punish them.

Every virtuous soul has enemies. If they do not hate him, they envy or fear him. Every contrivance is used to bring him into discredit. His best motives are often misrepresented, in order to give them the worst interpretation. Even the plainest deeds of goodness are attributed to selfishness; for the wicked hates everyone who is far above him.

There is but little room for a virtuous soul on this earth. His sincerity of will, his veracity of mind and his modesty of attitude, with their inherent power of virtuous spirituality, furnish too great a contrast with the children of this world. The silent admonition which a life of virtuous simplicity manifests, disturbs the ambitious craving and the unclean joys of human passions.

Human passions are so assertive, arrogant and often impudent that they distort everything virtuous; therefore, simplicity, being wholly unostentatious and unassertive, is easily assailed by them. Simple-mindedness and simple-heartedness are terms frequently used to designate ignorance or littleness of character, whereas, in reality, simplicity is the expression of the worthiest self-consciousness and character. Knowing its con-

vincing power, false souls simulate simplicity in their words and in their actions as a sure means of deception. Wickedness is never so certain of success as when it is able to assume the appearance of simplicity.

Among human beings, true simplicity is the most solitary, the most suffering, the most patient, the least understood and appreciated and the most misrepresented virtue. It is so pure and delicate that it escapes every sense of the passionate. The proud and vain hate it, the greedy disdain it and the lustful abuse it. Its ethereal power shines around each virtue, pure, innocent, genuine, meek and mild.

Simplicity is full of respectfulness; its words are clear, unadorned and unhesitating; and its sentiment is candid, engaging and free from impure interest. This virtue reveals the truest state of the soul.

The soul itself is a simple spiritual structure, indeed, the simplest structure in creation. Its essential forces are will, intellect and sentiment, with their inherent and sacred purpose for holiness, truth and love. That the soul be held and guided to this holy purpose God endows it with conscience, the might of His Divine Superspirit, and the absolute urger, illuminator and attracter of worthy determinations, thinking and feeling.

In view of this living fact, incontrovertible by any human science or practice, it is evident that the right attitude of the soul is profound humility, with its most

veracious expression of modesty. The man with any sense of truth cannot fail to realize this fact within himself. And why is it that man does not heed this fundamental fact? Because he is not and does not want to be inwardly sincere, truthful and modest.

Such a demand imposes absolute prohibition of his own passions, which he loves more than anything else in his life. In spite of his inward feeling to the contrary, he attempts to convince himself that following the letter of the law, as much as one can, is sufficient for a generally honorable life. Everything else is supposed to be a matter of personal sentiment which he may follow if he likes or discard when he chooses. Thus his individual logic consists in the segregation of his private affairs from the collective duties of conscience.

Only when a severe disappointment strikes his heart, inflated with worldly fortunes, does he begin to see and suffer from the complexity of his questionable efforts. Then he does take the time to survey the insincerity and untruthfulness of human actions, and sometimes even of his own. And then he himself becomes more modest and more amenable to a broader spirit of mutuality.

There can be no spirit of mutuality where sincerity, truthfulness and modesty are not the guiding motives of man. Without these characters of simplicity everything can be pretended, concealed or simulated; no

righteous covenant or agreement can be effected and no harmony among men installed. Simplicity deals with facts and facts are the living expressions of our determination.

For this reason this virtue necessarily involves all our motives, all our thoughts and all our sentiments. As the whole greatness of the soul is seen through its simplicity, thus the whole baseness of the soul is seen through its duplicity. There is no complete reliance on anybody unless he possesses sincerity of will, truthfulness of mind and modesty of attitude, the spiritual prism of true character.

VIRTUES OF THE HEART

The heart is the spiritual vessel of our life. All that our will, through its self-consciousness and consciousness, has determined to attain lies in the heart as its chosen possession, its real property. God does not and man cannot change these sentimental possessions unless the self-conscious will consents.

The will is the master of its sentimental complex. It is its own personal work and its whole life's achievement, for all the will does is for the sake of its self-sentiency, the state of its fruitional life. In its sentiment the self-conscious will sees distinctly and feels most palpably the effects of its worthy or unworthy power, and sounds and estimates its life accordingly.

If the self-conscious will recognizes and wholeheartedly accepts its affinity to God, its task of affiliation with God and imitation of Divine Life becomes the most important task of its life, and humility its profoundest tendency. In the faith in God lies the greatest glory, in devotion to God the greatest power and in gratitude to God the greatest blessing of the soul.

Faith, devotion and gratitude are the most insistent, most visible and most tangible and universal virtuous powers which enter into every relation of our life. A soul devoid of any faith, of any devotion and of any gratitude, a being without a trace of conscience, would be a monster which even the imagination cannot conceive.

The definition of faith, devotion and gratitude is given in the first chapter of the virtues of the will. We have seen their spiritual development in the virtue of fortitude and the spiritual effect in the virtue of blissfulness. We have seen the intrinsic connection and importance of these characters of humility in all our mental forces, endowing us with the mental tendency to God, with wisdom and simplicity, in which instance the whole activity of our consciousness relatively to conscience arrives at its full mental capacity and evolution. All that remains to be seen is the final sentimental effect, the revelation of the virtuous heart caused by humility.

There are three distinct virtues pertaining to the heart: *the virtue of love, the virtue of righteousness and the virtue of goodness.*

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE

Psychologically, love is the realization of the motives of the self-conscious will. This realization is the tendency to spiritual self-sentiency. In other words, what the self-conscious will wants and what it is searching for is self-sentiency, the fruitional effectuation of its life. The soul cannot be satisfied with volitional and visual powers without attaining their sentimental object, the fruitional self-sentiency which constitutes the most effective reality of life.

The soul endeavors to see the objects of life in order to obtain them, to possess them as its own, as part of its riches, power and fruition. This constitutes its inherent tendency to self-sentiency. But the direction to this self-sentiency differs according to the original standpoint the soul has taken with respect to the highest dignity and purpose of life.

The glorious standpoint of our life consists in the acceptance of the eternal sacrifice of God, the absolute Love of God, by virtue of which we are created in affinity to Him and endowed with the spiritual power of affiliation with Him and of imitating His Own holiest Life. This holiest sacrifice and the acceptance

of it constitutes the glorious participation in, cooperation with and affirmation of the Life of God within our spiritual being and, consequently, the affirmation of ourselves in God. Therein consists the essence of our dependence from God and the profoundest verdict of conscience reveals this real and incontrovertible fact. For if we do not accept this most glorious standpoint, there remains nothing but the unavoidable alternative, a life without God and without conscience, the independent source of ignominy, confusion, strife and despair.

The sacrificial Love of God is the eternal source and prototype of the virtue of love. Each Divine act is an act of sacrifice and it is precisely this sacrifice which the soul must imitate in order to attain immortal honor and merit. Difficult and almost impossible as this demand of conscience appears to the average man, he yet knows that if sacrifice does not prompt the deed that deed is selfish and worthless. All his judgments pertaining to personal merit are based on the sacrificial sense within him. Everybody has frequent glimpses and feeling of this exalted virtue, but only very few have a profound and serious interest in it.

Pure love manifests itself mainly through profound affection for the might, splendor and efficiency of virtues. Humility, by virtue of its faith in and devotion and gratitude to God, is the most inward power of love which the soul possesses. It emanates from the sacri-

ficial act of Divine Love, and thus constitutes the sublimest cause of those motives through which the Love of God is answered and the reciprocal sacrifice of the soul's own being to God is accomplished. Consequently, the love for God is the holiest, the profoundest the most exalting, the mightiest, the most blessing, the truest, the wisest, the sincerest, the most sacrificial, the most just and the most beautiful and endearing love.

Having thus a general understanding of the inward might of love, let us now consider its characters of *sacrificial motives*, *charitable sentiments* and *universal cosympathy and chastity*.

SACRIFICIAL MOTIVES

Our soul is the issue of the absolute Love of God, of His Divine sacrificial motives and, therefore, is impregnated with that same spirit as the highest motive of our life. Even in the broadest application each creature in some degree possesses an affinity to its Creator through which it reveals this inward spirit and power.

Accordingly, the Superspirit of holy sacrifice, being the supreme motive of the existence of the soul, demands, by the very right to this existence, the spirit of sacrifice in the soul as the one most righteous, most benevolent and immortal spirit of our whole life.

That this sacrificial spirit is the supreme and real issue in our life is proved in all our daily activities and in all our thinking and longing. We know that unless our deed is evidently sacrificial we are suspected or accused of selfishness. We know that unless our thoughts or words are clear and truthful relatively to our motives the issue at stake is distrusted. And we know that unless sentiments are supported by sacrificial deeds they are not believed and impart no conviction.

What we are always searching for, what we always love to see and what the heart is always longing to attain is this very spirit of sacrifice, that breath of

Divinity and the positive revelation of our divine childhood. This spirit is so intrinsically interwoven in our whole life, that, in spite of the human dispositions to the contrary, it often impels us, like a suppressed fire, to deeds worthy of a better cause. Sacrifices of life and means are offered in inhuman wars, to vain ambitions and lust. And all this comes so easily and is done with such abandon that even the wicked may well believe that sacrifice is the real issue of life.

But sacrifice is holy, charitable, righteous and full of benevolence. It is not an instrument for the low satiation of human passions, but a fruition of Life Divine. Such fruition is essentially humble, because it partakes in Divine Life. It is the supreme fruition of faith in the Absolute, the prototypical Holiness, Truth and Love of God. It constitutes the supreme fruition of devotion and gratitude to God, as our eternal Creator, Lord and Father, the most devoted Father to His faithful child, to whom the eternity of His own Life is opened.

This holy fruition of sacrifice is the immutable and inexhaustible source of fearless and triumphant power. It never bends before an unworthy spirit and wants no other taste of power than that of the sacrificial might of God. For the might of God is the only sufficient and blessing power of life.

The fruition of sacrifice is the most powerful incentive to profoundest and boundless visions, the living

source of wisdom and the most trustful supporter of simplicity. No soul can attain great visions without the prompting of sacrificial sentiments; no soul can be permeated with great visions without sacrificial motives. Nor can any man without these motives possess the power of true wisdom and simplicity.

God as our God, our Lord and our eternal Father, is the absolute Super-Being of eternal love, and, as such, justly and rightly demands the supreme concentration of our love on Him. Our love of God is the effect of our eternal allegiance to Him. There is nothing in heaven or beneath it which makes our love so imperative and exacting as the bond of love with God. All heavenly friendships and all solemn vows are based on it and rendered sacred by it. To maintain this holy bond, no adoration dares to surpass or equal the adoration of God, for His Holiness, His Truth and His Love are absolutely the most adorable.

Having sacrifice as its ground, the virtue of love is supereminently righteous, and extends its affection according to the eternal rule of righteousness. Thus, the more worthy and estimable the object, the profounder, nearer and more tender is love; and, the less worthy the object, the less profound, more distant and less affectionate it is. The failure to observe this righteous rule of love causes untold difficulties and hindrances in our spiritual progress.

In the application of this rule the virtuous soul

evolves and manifests his fortitude. Nothing hinders him from reaching out for the righteous love. Regardless of how painful the achievement may be, he wishes his heart to be in that worthy and virtuous position where God wants it to be. He keeps himself free from all sentimental entanglements and indulgences, that his heart may remain strong and unimpeded whenever the Voice of God calls him to be a herald of virtuous mission; for only a powerful heart, filled with the intensest motive to participate in Divine Might, is able to achieve great virtuous deeds.

Each Divine Might is a particular fountain of holy love, of which the virtuous soul partakes. At the beginning of virtuous attainments, the soul chooses one or a few Divine Attributes as the supreme objects of adoration and love; for the vacant heart longs to be filled at least with a part of Divine Life. It begins with the most expressive virtues, those which are the partial manifestation of humility, the most difficult virtue for the human soul to attain.

Thus it usually begins with sincere benevolence and generosity, with cheerfulness, patience and enthusiasm. Thence it rises to the much stricter virtue of righteousness in deeds, thoughts and feelings toward God and fellow creatures. As it becomes more powerful with each advance, the heart grows in profounder desires.

With growing intensity it longs for sacrifice in order to give a distinct proof of its worthiness. The rising

conscience keeps constant survey of the soul's motives and directs them to profounder virtues. The ascending heart longs to be simple, that it may deceive neither itself, nor anyone else. It desires intensely the great might of wisdom, in order to be most efficient in the fulfillment of virtuous life, and it rivets its eye on the eternal Light of God, strains its ear to the eternal Voice of God and cleaves to them with the immovable constancy of absolute faith. All this it does in order to understand God in the ineffable might and dominion of His Holiness, Truth and Love.

Having thus risen to the apex of eternal Light, the soul, endowed with so many virtues, cries for their most inward reality. Its heart longs to be permeated with the security, peace and joy of heaven and this can only be attained through the all-conquering virtue of fortitude.

Now all preceding virtues become inspired with still greater power. With unrestrained energy for holiness, with immutable perseverance in all holy attainments and with continuous triumph over every hindrance to holiness, the virtuous hero stands at the eternal portals of consummate humility, the heaven of divine affiliation.

This is the ascent to God of the soul strayed from His holy presence, the ascent of love, everlastingly inviting, enlightening, fortifying and sanctifying; the one supreme, pure love, the summit of all virtuous

desires and the eternal spring which quenches the burning thirst for holy life.

The faith in the immortality of the soul arises mainly from the love of God; for immortality is far less a question of knowledge, than of our inmost dignity and interest. A will without virtuous motives has of logical necessity but little or no interest in personal immortality. A mind without virtue prefers to doubt or even to deny immortality, for the responsibility of a virtuous life disturbs its willful self-consciousness. And a heart without virtue subconsciously feels that it is not worthy of immortal life, or it fears the consequences of an unworthy life which, through supreme justice, are bound to come. Consequently, it endeavors to soothe its inward anxiety with the vain persuasion that death ends everything.

Everything dies and yet everything lives. In all its expressions the perpetuity of life is so conspicuous and insisting that in itself, it is the motive power of all our endeavors, researches and desires. All our tasks and work are done for the sake of future life. The unbeliever in immortality is bound to face the most desperate and absurd consequences. He must believe that the whole human progress, the ever-increasing efforts for greater light, the struggle for righteousness, the earned dignity of the worthy, our rising spiritual education, the most cherished friendships, and everything worthy of love, have but one distinct aim, namely the aim of

the absolute personal death; the destruction of everything worthy, most obvious and dearest.

Immortality is the very pulsation of personal life, and, being the issue of the eternal Love of God, it must be loved with the whole heart in order to be clearly understood. Its most vital ground is our participation in the eternal Life of God. If we do not understand this supreme fact then, indeed, immortality remains enigmatical.

Participation in Divine Life is the fundamental proof of immortality, for it presents to us both the sacrificial cause and the sublimest aim of the soul's existence, without which cause and aim neither immortality nor life itself can be rationally conceived. All other arguments, metaphysical and psychological, only indicate immortality, but the real reason for it lies in the participation in Divine life. Religious subjects require the strictest logic. If the logic of our immortal dignity and love is not sufficient, then the mere circumstantial logic is of small avail.

The most palpable and convincing proof of everything is dignity and love, and not the idea of it. The idea only indicates and presents. It is a definition, not a tangibility and concreteness. The substantiality of the soul proves itself far more through the contact with and adherence to the Absolute, than through the vision of the Absolute. Owing to this fact, those who do not love the worthiest content of life with their whole

hearts cannot attain a clear understanding of immortal life.

Each soul wants to live everlastingly, though, on account of its religious ignorance, it does not clearly know why. The Superspirit of the eternal Love of God causes this desire in the soul and feeds it incessantly; consequently death does not destroy this desire, it only intensifies it. If only a few sparks of worthiness are in the soul, love follows them regardless of all barriers of death.

Sparks of worthiness are the distant issue of the sacrifice of Divine Love; the assurance to the weak soul that God has not deserted even the little ones. In the attachment of the soul to worthy acts, though little in themselves, God forever implants His eternal promise of a greater and more beautiful life. Were it not for this transcendent promise, humanity would have a right to fall into despair and to annihilate itself.

This assurance of immortality has always been the most cherished promise of the prophets and mystics and still is the most interesting and attractive subject to all leaders of souls. All temples in all places resound with this eternal promise. And why? Because it is the most inward promise of the love of sacrifice which, within itself, contains charity, justice and goodness as the eternal might of immortal life. Eliminate these mights from our life, and then, indeed, the belief in the soul's death is logical and justifiable. Against such

an assumption a great poet cried out desperately: "Satan, seize my soul that I may not perish!" The might of sacrifice so strongly affects the soul that the denial of its immortality elicits most extreme sentiments.

No one feels the might of sacrifice so strongly as the virtuous. To him it is the most powerful and expressive might of his heart. He wants it with all the power of his will. He wants his self-consciousness to be permeated with this holy might and his heart consummately attached to it. He wants to live, to work, to suffer and to die for the sake of sacrifice, for sacrifice is the highest manifestation of his dignity, of his sublime intellect, of his beautiful heart and the undeceiving expression of his spirit of humility and love for God. In this act God recognizes His true and faithful child and leads him into the glory and beatitude of His intimate Eternity.

CHARITABLE SENTIMENTS

The power of application of sacrificial dispositions and deeds consists in the virtuous character of charity, for charity is the active spirit of sacrifice. Through this character the sacrificial motives and sentiments are continually seeking for ways and means by which to bring their virtuous power into action.

Charity is the ever open field of exercise and growth for the faithful, devoted and grateful heart. There are no limitations to the growth of faith, devotion and gratitude. Their potency arises from God and extends over the whole creation.

Whenever the spirit of charity is on the decline among men, all the spiritual achievements of humanity are arrested and also decline. Then the dark spirit of pride and selfishness stealthily raises its head and surveys the field of its prey. Owing to this constant danger, no character of virtue has been so insistently urged from the temples of religion as charity. Its voice is not only an urging to uphold human mutuality, but also and mainly an urging to uphold the spiritual honor, wisdom and love in the heart of man. Where these virtues dwell human mutuality is the logical consequence.

On the other hand no remorse of conscience is as keen as the one caused by the total absence or habitual neglect of the spirit of charity. Regardless of how

a man may try to forget or to replace this conscience-stirring sentiment by selfish satisfactions, the reproach "Thou hast done nothing good in thy life," constantly reappears in his self-consciousness denouncing the baseness of his living standpoint. It is the good that charity demands, because the good is the result of sacrificial action and the distribution of the good to the weaker souls is the foremost duty of the stronger.

The virtuous soul is always moved with sincere affection towards his equal and with compassion toward all who are beneath him. He is conscious that, regardless of how low a soul has fallen, the spark of divine fire and light is not wholly extinguished. This spark he endeavors to reanimate with inward sympathy, and strives to implant light and warmth into the dark and cold soul, in order to revive the sense of deeper sentiments and to awaken its self-consciousness to religious responsibility. If he fails he turns away with sadness and appeals to God's mercy. If he succeeds he offers gratitude to God for the honor of cooperation.

This cosympathy makes his rigor of justice gentler, his firmness more attractive and his persuasion more winning. Nothing is more revolting to him than the brutal ruthlessness with which the unvirtuous man proceeds in the name of right. All motives and sentiments must be charitable and never lose respect for the lower brother, for even the worst soul is capable of accomplishing some little good.

Moreover, the charitable man endeavors to search more for the good than for the evil intentions, that he be sure of forming a just judgment. Not until the evil intention is clear, does he apply commensurate precaution and reserve, and only in very important issues does he take the aggressive. If attacked unjustly he defends himself by a simple protest and truthful statement. His conscience being tender, his expressions will oftener be gentle than forceful. The manifestation of the power of the virtuous character is less understood and is sometimes frightening, while gentleness is always ingratiating.

The virtuous man begins with his own heart. He first introduces spiritual order in himself. His inclinations and dispositions are subordinated under the strict supervision and direction of conscience, for this order constitutes the power of his heart. Precisely the same is done with his thoughts. They, too, must follow the sublime dictates of the Voice of God.

Once this determination is settled, he decides on such external conditions of life as disturb the least and enhance most effectually his virtuous progress. Wordly ambitions and luxuries are rejected as unworthy of any consideration, and all his time and efforts are devoted to the serious task of virtuous life. Moreover, the beautiful joy of helping others on the path of spiritual progress surpasses all the questionable and vanishing pleasures he has denied himself.

Through Divine Love the soul is born and in charity it expands its life. Accordingly, all its sentiments yearn for the achievement of the highest good, that they be worthy of their holy aim. Nothing holy grows without charity. As the course of sacrifice, it fills all phases and spheres of the universe. There is no soul which does not love charity, and which does not feel the inward longing for and the need of it.

Spiritual charity surpasses material charity as the day surpasses the night, for it consists in an intimate soul-to-soul contact. Each word of its spirit appeals to the profoundest and noblest sensibilities. It awakens, lifts, encourages and leads the soul to worthier and sublimer life. It makes a friend out of a stranger and a brother out of a friend. Its might is the most ingratiating and the most binding.

Charity is the most practical worker of the virtuous heart, the nourishment of the soul and the most palpable taste of heaven. Happy is the poor in material means when he divides his frugal meal with the hungry or gives his warm garment to the shivering. The most luxurious indulgence on earth can furnish nothing to compare with his lasting gladness. And truly unhappy is he who has missed or avoided the joys which are attained through sacrifice.

Far more difficult to understand are the deeds of internal charity. Admirable as are the frequent charitable services to mankind in hospitals or on battlefields,

they do not equal the incessant efforts demanded by the charitable solicitude of those silent workers and virtuous leaders who, for the spiritual weal of humanity, sacrifice every means and every moment of their lives.

Charity is full of thoughtfulness, and, in all of its considerations, that of worthiness is foremost. It seeks first for the right estimate of the soul, that its judgment may be true to conscience. The childship of God is the lens of its vision. It tests the sentiments, ideas and motives according to the Will of God and, accordingly, it either approaches the soul in the spirit of friendship or else it remains reserved.

Into its intimate life charity receives nothing impure and selfish. It wants to live in the atmosphere and order of holy deeds, because it is itself a performer of holy deeds. It judges each station of life according to its sacred aims and extends its deep-felt sympathy for the virtuous performance of sacred duties. It longs to see each soul the equal of the best and everywhere it works with this purpose.

Charity is the sublime spirit of our social laws and the legal establishments which do not sustain this spirit incur the danger of destruction. This spirit is so sensitive that if there is no charitable power to sustain human order, the heart becomes desperate, takes recourse in vengeance and assails those who have the means to practise charity and fail to do so. If our legal estab-

ishments lack the charitable spirit of religion, the legal structure crumbles, owing to its soulless rigidity.

Ideals without charity are the monstrous imaginings of perverted intellects, the fiction of cruel hearts, which in their insatiable greed and lust for power devour what has no means of self-defense. The soul without charity always mocks goodness and tramples on righteousness.

Owing to our miserable intellectual education we fail to notice that charity is strictly interwoven with metaphysical thinking. Each thought, theoretical or practical, pertains to the self-consciousness of the will, that it be able to attain the sublimest sentiments. Truth without love would be horrible. There is no other aim in thinking save that each theoretical thought, in its logical deduction, shall bear witness to the divine effect of life, which is love. It must be thus, for without the motive of this divine effect, no theory of love and charity can be realized.

It is a justifiable criticism of metaphysics that thus far it has not evolved the clear idea of that which is the dearest and most precious attainment of the soul, the love of sacrifice and charity. Wrong logical methods, the lack of the elevation of the heart, and above all the neglect of conscience in the progress of our intellectual endeavors, are the main reason for our metaphysical deficiencies.

If charity moves our souls to deeds, it must also move our thinking capacities, and, if charity is appli-

cable to little thoughts, with all the more reason is it applicable to great thoughts. Consequently, charity must be the breath and fragrance of great constructive theories, that the soul may embrace the great mental edifice not only with its mind but also with its heart.

The truest visitor and missionary of love is charity. Its frankness is open, because it has nothing to conceal, and its inward power is winning, convincing and conquering. There is a calm majesty in charity, because it reflects the true childship of God. There is a convincing evidence of humility, which acts with faith and imparts faith, which proves devotion and elicits devotion, and which causes the mutual spirit of gratitude.

Charity is the most inward expectation of fallen souls, the demand of every righteous heart, the most urgent need of mankind in all conditions of our earthly life and the most audible Voice of God.

No reward is asked by charity. Its power consists in giving; the imparting of virtuous treasures. It needs no reward, for it is rewarded by the power of its divine aim. It needs no proofs, for it is fully able to prove its own might. It heals all wounds of the heart, gathers the better fragments of human thoughts and moulds them in a nobler working power of the intellect, and supplies motives to the will which are glorious and invincible. Great and blessed is the hero of charity, for he is possessed of superspiritual powers and dwells near the holiest heart of his heavenly Father.

UNIVERSAL COSYMPATHY AND CHASTITY

Sympathetic tenderness and purity is the last character of the virtue of love. In this character the virtuous soul lays bare the utter unselfishness of its motives, mentality and desire. The soul wants everything obtainable for the sake of virtuous life in itself and others. It seeks for all visual means by which to find and impart virtuousness. And it longs fervently for the divine treasures of the heart.

All this wanting, seeking and longing is so sincere, true and modest as to cause a profound sympathy between the desired object and the desiring soul. This profoundly virtuous sympathy is the spiritual tenderness of all that is great and sublime and it is this tenderness which makes the virtuous soul so beautiful and attractive.

Great power of will and intellect evokes admiration and respect. Yet, no matter how much the soul may admire it, it does not possess the same power of attraction as does the tender sympathy of the heart. The attainment of great power of will and intellect demands a long assiduous labor of which only very few among

us are capable, while to yield to the attractiveness of a virtuous heart is much easier. All that is needed is sufficient good will to follow the virtuous course and to understand that virtue is the divine aim of life.

The most sympathetic voice is the Voice of God, for it teaches everlasting and universal sympathy toward God and all creatures. Spiritual sympathy is a divine magnet of mutual attraction and the gathering might of our scattered virtuous inclinations, dispositions and powers. With its right arm it holds fast to God, and with its left it reaches down even to the deepest abyss of life in order to impart its blessing assistance.

Love knows no contempt even for those who will not harken to its heavenly voice. It calls and calls, like an eternal echo of Divinity, until it is heard. Nor does the virtuous soul in the contact with his equals diminish his sympathy for those who are beneath him, for virtues stimulate the wish to inspire those to whom the experience of sacrificial love is unknown.

Through this act the utmost tenderness of a sublime conscience is revealed. The willingness to esteem every creature of God is the urging motive of this spiritual tenderness. The consciousness that, regardless of their proximity to or distance from God, all souls are His children, moves the virtuous soul to commensurate compassion with their best endeavors. But by virtue of justice his interest in those who manifest greater willing-

ness to return to God's ways is greater than in those who are less willing.

Love is the giving might, the one might which not only remains undepleted, but becomes more potent by giving. It is like an eternal tree of life. Each picking of a blossom or fruit, each pruning of a branch makes not only its trunk but even its roots stronger, so that the fruit becomes nobler and more prolific.

Love is the renascent factor of virtuous life. Its sympathetic infusion regenerates and revivifies the heart suffering from spiritual debility and inward languor. A soul unfit to give sympathy and love is like a decaying corpse and requires a heavenly spirit for its resuscitation and preservation.

Love often manifests itself through insisting ardor, in order to overwhelm coldness and refractoriness with its blessing gifts; for blessing gifts persuade and inspire to willingness of pure sympathy and thus lead the frigid soul to warmer, more virtuous action.

Divine love possesses the might of inspiration, of lucidity and of animation. No will ever accomplishes a great virtuous deed without the divine might of inspiration, no genius produces a great thought without the might of divine lucidity, and no sentiment rises to sacrifice without the might of divine animation. This is the supreme sympathy of God with the soul. Through giving, it teaches giving and its sympathy evokes sympathy.

Our soul is not only a creation but also an example of Divine love. Each example possesses the spirit or motive of the giver, and, therefore, must follow this spirit. This constitutes the great rule of worthy life and the profoundest reason for virtuous sympathy. Among souls this sympathy is an invitation to virtuous friendship. The strong of will often needs the calmness of contemplation or the mildness of sentiments, whereas calm thoughtfulness and gentleness of heart often need more energy. Through mutual appreciation of single virtues, cosympathy causes beautiful affiliation, strength and harmony.

The heart of the soul lives on sympathy mainly. It is its warmth and its beauty. The attraction of glory and esteem is transcendent sympathy, the divine sympathy with the soul. This glorious attraction causes and evokes sympathy for virtues. Consequently, the one who is insensible to this attraction is incapable of entering the great life of virtue. Such hearts must first be crushed before they begin to feel the attraction of Divine Love.

Nor can anyone attain great visions without profound sympathy with truth. We generally call it endeavor after truth, but this statement is not sufficient. Each endeavor must radiate with warmth before it becomes fruitful, or, in other words, the will must first heat its heart that it be able to attract and absorb the object of endeavor. A heart without sympathy is dead.

In all our relations spiritual sympathy always makes the first step, because it manifests the sacrificial sense of esteem and delight. And the more modest its manner, the profounder is its spirit. It is the true sentimental radiation of the best that the soul possesses. Consequently, when virtuous sympathy toward another soul is repulsed, the keenness of the disappointment causes the restriction of the best feelings.

This sympathy is the source of the tenderness of the heart; and the more virtuous the heart the profounder is its tenderness. The tenderness of the highest spirits is indescribable. Descriptions may be attractive and beautiful as art can make them, but they do not move the heart like a living soulful tenderness.

It cannot be otherwise, for sacrificial sentiments possess a transcendent power of expression surpassing all natural art. The greatest art of the virtuous soul consists in the most complete and sincere sympathy with the whole creation of God, for nothing is well understood that is not profoundly felt.

No man can attain any virtue unless he has sympathy for it. None can attain truth unless he has sympathy with the Light of God; indeed, nobody cares for anything unless he is in sympathy with it. This is the eternal law of sentiments, which leads us to the heaven of sacrifice, or confines us to the horrible limitations of spiritual egotism with its concomitant debasement.

The glory and the love of God and the conditions

of virtuous friendship demand the concentration not only of our efforts but also of our delights on the paramount honor of being a pure child of God. The deviation from this holy demand debases our worthiness and tears us down to a comparison with animals.

Since all our thoughts and sentiments must be pure, in order to maintain our spiritual dignity, so must also be the body, the soul's external instrument and garment. The body is so strictly interrelated with the soul that whatever takes place in the soul's inward determination, thinking and desire is not only expressed in the physical countenance but is also held by it as a witness of the soul's habits. It does not require much spiritual sense and intelligence to discriminate between the sensually debased and the innocent, or the one who controls his sensual passions by conscience.

The virtuous soul takes strict precautions and rigid means to forbid the sinful craving for the flesh. His intense desire for virtues and his predominant love for God keeps him above that insisting passion. A sincere, intense and repeated vow of continence is his shield against voluptuous insinuation and the choice of spiritual association and friendship the best means of sustaining continence. Glory to those religious creeds which invite to and protect the high standard of chastity.

Much more difficult is the maintaining of chastity in matrimony. But the virtuous husband and wife will bear it in their minds and in their hearts, that matri-

mony has, besides spiritual friendship, but one aim, the production of a young body into which God in His almighty providence places a feeble soul which, with the cooperation of its parents, is to be raised to a virtuous life. Beyond this aim, delight in flesh is unworthy. Any infringement upon this virtuous rule disgraces the soul before God and before its own conscience. The virtuous soul does not stoop to mere sensual delight, for he is conscious that no serious act is permissible unless it has a worthy aim.

The concentration of delight on sensuality is one of the greatest curses of humanity. It destroys all spiritual refinement and energy, it paralyzes the capacity for sublimer thoughts and fills the heart with insatiable craving for the flesh with the inevitable consequences of physical infirmity and spiritual impotence.

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THE VIRTUE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Justice, in its concrete sense, consists in the eternal guardianship of the virtuous content of life. Righteousness is the personal application to justice. The might of Divine Justice imparts the inalienable right to virtuous life, and the virtue of righteousness, being the transcendent reflex of Divine Justice in conscience, demands the whole-souled affirmation of virtuous life.

Though the source of righteousness lies in humility, as the most righteous state of our soul, it expresses its power mainly through the processive virtues of fortitude and wisdom. Thus righteousness, as a virtue, is chiefly the sentimental effect of the volitional fortitude and mental wisdom. It is for this reason that it possesses within itself both the force of action and the freedom from all selfish purposes.

Notwithstanding that righteousness affects the will and mind as well as the heart, it nevertheless is essentially a virtue of the heart, because volitional fortitude and mental wisdom are concentrated into an habitual sentiment of the heart. Here righteousness always acts with a force which only sentiments, flowing from sacrificial motives, can impart. No other motives are

capable of producing any sense of righteous feeling.

In its broader application, righteousness demonstrates each preceding and succeeding virtue. Living in the center of all sentimental processes of the heart, righteousness is the sacred governor and controller of emotions. No feeling is allowed to rise, no thought to suggest and no motive to form without its approbation and direction. Its tendency is the actual affirmation of holiness, truth and love through active and practical affirmation of Divine justice.

It is right that the outer throb of Divine determination, which is the substance of the soul's will, be pure, mighty and full of bliss. It is right that the reflex flame of Divine Truth, which is the substance of the soul's intellect, be guided by the source of its light and filled with wisdom and truthfulness. And it is right that the sacred vessel of virtues, which is the immaculate substance of the soul's heart, should contain no other love except that of its holiest Creator and Father. This is the transcendent motive of Divine justice and the righteousness of the soul is the response to this Divine motive.

Owing to this intimate affiliation with God, righteousness is the most steadfast, most zealous and most intrepid virtue. It never yields its holy ground. Not only does it defend the innocent, but it also attacks the offender. Faithfulness to the Holy Will of God

and the might of conscience places the flaming sword of invincibility in the hands of the righteous.

To understand righteousness in its full power we must understand its application to our *determinations*, our *visions* and our *sentiments*.

RIGHTEOUS DETERMINATION

Righteous determination consists in the choosing of and resolving on actions according to the absolute right of the Will of God. Since the Will of God is the absolutely just Will, by virtue of our affiliation and cooperation with God, our determination must be righteous. Once this vital standpoint of our life is doubted or denied, there is neither the absolute reason for nor absolute power of introducing, much less, of sustaining righteousness within us; the basis of right and duty is destroyed and the door to sins and crimes is open wide.

For this obvious reason the necessity for humility before God is most conspicuous. The one who does not recognize and accept the law of God as the supreme law of our will, must, of logical necessity, lose his sublime and constructive freedom of virtues and fall prey to the base and destructive freedom of his passions. Furthermore, there cannot be any serious faith in, devotion to and gratitude for righteous deeds and, consequently, no power for righteousness can be attained and no righteous motives formed.

Righteousness is the spiritual channel through which all deeds must pass to prove their worthiness or to

divulge their unworthiness. Its power constitutes the sacred alternative which demonstrates either our spiritual uprightness and honor or the willful depravity of our character.

All movements and motives of the will are involved in righteousness. Thus no worthy movement of the self-conscious will takes place without its prompting, and no worthy motive can be formed without its approbation. It allows no means which dishonor the dignity of the cause, for a righteous cause absolutely requires righteous and honorable means.

Each action pertaining to a cause, or, as a means employed in a cause, must bear the obvious testimony of consistence with the just and charitable Will of God. Righteousness suffers no pretext and severely forbids juggling with conscience. Denominational perversions and political prevarications it alike condemns.

If contemplatists and pietists, as well as the writers of dogmas and the so-called "defenders of faith," in their laborious volumes and innumerable sermons, had devoted more effort to the teaching of the virtue of righteousness, humanity would now be a great deal nearer to the Kingdom of God.

No human authority, institution or ideal can long exist unless it strictly conforms to righteousness, and no man has a right to deem himself either religious or honorable unless he possesses righteousness, the ineffaceable evidence of faith and honor.

Righteousness is the most palpable demonstration of the soul's power, which evinces the potent and beautiful content of life. It pays the highest tribute to the Highest in Holiness and to every soul according to its virtuous elevation. It sustains and defends this holy content of spirituality with unswerving energy. Justice is its sole object, and nowhere does righteousness evolve its power with greater effect than in the homage for and defense of that which must be adored, esteemed and upheld.

The eternal bulwark, proof and vindication of conscience is found in righteousness, and this fact alone is sufficient to cause us to adore the commanding and exacting justice of God. Its superspiritual power derives from this commanding and exacting justice of God; it permeates all the forces of our soul and demands a strict account of our deeds, thoughts and sentiments. Each serious man makes a more or less careful scrutiny of his actions, especially when he has failed in his endeavor. But the virtuous man scrutinizes his motives so thoroughly before the fulfillment of the act as to debar any possibility of self-seeking sentiment in his endeavor.

The one who does not so scrutinize his motives is far from being righteous and is unable to contribute in any marked degree to a righteous cause. All his aspirations and sentiments and all his prayers for righteousness will be of little avail, if his will is too weak to sacrifice

his whole force for the sake of the sacred intangibility of sacrificial values.

If anyone desires to exercise his will to power, righteousness offers him the greatest battlefield of glory. The battle of all our motives takes place on this glorious field and here the victory of eternal values over evil motives, darkness and hate is won. Here the virtuous soul proves his great manhood; not an assuming will to power but the great power of his virtuous will. Himself conquered by the holiest Will of God, he is crowned with the power of invincibility and is ready to suffer and to die not only for the sake of his own sacrificial worthiness but also for that of others.

RIGHTEOUS VISION

Since vision is only the mental process of our self-conscious and self-sentient will, it always follows the inward determination of the will. In other words, mental visions are the defining reflex of the soul's inward state of volition or endeavor. Practically speaking, one is always occupied with those thoughts which illustrate his inward tendency and does not care to think of anything in which he is not interested. Thus visions are the reflectors of the volitional tendency of the soul.

With these visions the soul endeavors to grasp mentally the object of its life, in its unlimited variety, in order to adjust itself to the whole complex of life. But the complex of life is so great, both in its variety and degrees that, unless the soul accepts the rule of righteous vision, it is unable to define rightly its own individual standpoint or any other collective standpoint of life.

Our religious, philosophical, scientific and social confusion is ascribable to the lack of the most practical rule of life, which is righteousness, and to the consequent lack of its strict application to our visions. When "sacred scriptures and traditions" teach us a creation of God without the sentiment of His holiest sacrifice,

and of suffering in consequence of the sins of its progenitors, or of aggressive wars and swindles blessed by God, we must not be astonished at the lack of the due sense of righteousness in the soul. At the very root of our allegiance to God righteousness has become stunned if not wholly annihilated.

When philosophy teaches us that mere thoughts are realities and not the mental course of the will, and that the will is only a consequence of our feeling or thinking, we must not wonder at the indifference to a righteous sense of responsibility among the intelligent classes.

When sciences are feeding our human spirit with a knowledge of mere physical forces and material, utilitarian commodities, without the slightest effort to show the consistency of these forces with and their dependence from the spiritual forces, we ought not to be surprised that the inward hearing of human conscience, honor and righteousness has become deafened and the madness for worldly values increased.

The religious, philosophical and scientific factors are the leading factors of life. If these factors do not demonstrate and inculcate the spirit of righteousness, our whole educational structure must be wrong; and every serious man feels that it is wrong.

No religious or theological doctrine has given us a clear vision of the "Face of God," or a clear plan of Divine creation. Consequently, it could not give us a compelling understanding of an actual bond

between God and the soul, the most righteous bond of faith, devotion and gratitude. It could not make us understand that we actually live on this divine bond of religion, that in every moment of our lives we are in continuous contact and account with it, and that on this holy bond relies our conscience, our honor and our whole life. When religion, the very term of which conveys the meaning of bond between God and the soul, is so unclear, how is it possible for a man, even if he be a believer in God, to possess righteous views or righteous sense?

Philosophy, the mightiest mental weapon against irreligious falsehood, has failed, inasmuch as it has been unable to define clearly the highest values of life. It has failed even in the clear definition of the laws of the mind by which the highest values are conceived.

If logic is not clearly consistent with the absolute laws of truth in our conscience and with the whole structure of our spiritual forces, it is bound to fail us in practical life. We not only want to think logically, but we want to live logically. And to live logically means to act, to see and to feel righteously. Logic is the righteous rule for righteous thinking. If this plain axiom is not well understood, then, indeed, our concept of philosophy is superficial and its teaching ineffective.

The majority of natural scientists, holding to the opinion that their researches have nothing in common with religion and morals, have a wrong opinion of the

value of nature. Nature has an intrinsically instrumental, illustrative and utilitarian value as to its laws, processes and effects. If it has value, which is undeniable, there must be a righteous rule for the understanding of these values. Surely, even a radical naturalist will not consent to the opinion that nature is a mere mechanical instrument for self-satisfaction or amusement, as it appears to little children. He respects nature, he sees values in nature, for values are spiritual predicates. And spiritual predicates, by the very sense of their dignity, demand righteousness, a force in regard to which the naturalist is equally as sensitive as any other mortal. Indeed, he will die for the sake of this sense sooner than for the sake of his whole science.

The more potent the virtue of righteousness, the profounder and broader are our visions, for righteousness insists on seeing not only one or one thousand things rightly, but on seeing all things rightly. On this power depends the harmony and consistency of our important views. No theological or philosophical theory will stand the test of life unless all spiritual and natural forces are brought to a right account and in strict coherence, and unless the right gradation of their values is established. This is not an exclusive task of the intellect, as so many presume, but of the righteous will, with its righteous heart, through the intellect.

Truth is holy because it is the eternal definition of Holiness, and cannot be attained without intense longing

for it. This is righteous and the will must be inwardly righteous to attain such holy longing. Here the fortitude and wisdom of the righteous will is probed, proved and effected, for righteousness is the final evidence of fortitude and wisdom.

The righteous man is fully conscious of this fact and never abates the effort of his virtuous determination to attain fortitude and wisdom. He never allows himself to be misled by the clamorous opinions of the multitude or by standards approved by ages, much as he may respect the latter for the partial service they have rendered. He always cleaves to the distinct demand of conscience and the honor of divine childship, which knows no expedients. To him nothing is right without righteousness.

Honesty is merely the application of righteousness to external transactions, while righteousness, as such, is the inward appreciation and confirmation of everything holy, true and sacrificial. Thus an "honest" man may be far from righteous.

Righteousness in thinking is its very logic. There is an eternal rule in conscience for the order and rightness of our thoughts, and this eternal rule is found in the categories reflecting from the order of virtues. The criterion of truth rests in worthiness, the first and absolute demand of God and the transcendent object of life.

It follows that righteousness guides all correct think-

ing and that all errors in thinking are due to its absence. We often hear it said that this or that person is "honestly mistaken." In considering such statements, due allowance must be made for the superficiality and ambiguity of the word "honest." But if "honest" is here used in the sense of "righteous," then it must be understood that it is impossible for any soul to be "righteously mistaken." Errors in thinking are, indeed, all too common, and it may be granted in most cases that they are unconscious errors, but this merely means that the thinker is unconscious of his own lack of righteousness.

Worthiness, as the transcendent object of holy life, causes the unquenchable thirst for the righteous knowledge of our life and imparts righteousness to our thinking power. If this were not true, then all knowledge would be corruptible. Knowledge without regard to worthiness, no matter how extensive, makes no righteous characters, but merely causes conceit, vanity and egotism. The sophistry of pseudo-philosophers and pseudo-theologians is justly denounced by every righteous mind. To test a statement it is enough to apply it in practice; then we soon see the worthy or unworthy conclusion.

Unrighteous statements or opinions in religious and social sciences cause hatred, corrupt the human character and result in disaster. Owing to this danger, righteousness is the most insisting virtue. Nothing great, sublime

and harmonious can be achieved without righteousness. It is the builder and preserver of universal harmony and the sole bridge of mutual understanding.

All true knowledge is derived from the soul-permeating sense of righteousness. Wisdom is mental righteousness, and each interpretation of its understanding is invariably the right interpretation. It never bends or twists its straightness of vision and, therefore, makes compromise with nothing that is not holy, true and good. Sincerity and truthfulness are the witnesses of righteousness, and, for this reason, righteousness is unconcealable.

The righteous knows God's Will within his soul's intimacy and rightly expects the good for the good deed and evil for evil deeds. If man had no inward consciousness of this palpable law of God, he would become a ferocious beast. Each thought and sentiment of the virtuous soul stands continually before the divine tribunal of this law, in order to obtain the ultimate verdict whether this or that motive is to be accomplished or not. If the verdict of righteousness calls for the fulfillment of the act, the virtuous soul unhesitatingly proceeds to its realization. In a contrary instance, both the thought and the sentiment of the motive are eliminated. In this spiritual process, the virtuous soul conceives his worthiness before God and this vision gives him the assurance of his righteous standpoint.

RIGHTEOUS SENTIMENT

The formal habitation of righteousness is in virtuous self-sentiency, the heart of the soul; for all virtuous sentiments pass through this virtue as the final demonstration of their worthiness and power. The worthy will chooses the righteous course of action, its self-consciousness searches for the divine light to see this course clearly, and its self-sentiency longs for righteousness and demands that it inhabit the heart.

Psychologically, the heart is the vessel of the choice and attainment of spiritual values. Spiritual values are not like material values, which are apparently dead or immovable in themselves; they are full of sensitiveness and emotion. They incite the will to action, the mind to thinking. They rise and abate at the slightest contact with similar or contrary sentiments in oneself and others. Their harmony depends from the power of righteous will and their clearness from the righteous mind.

Spiritual values are sacrifices. We all know that what is not sacrificial has, to say the least, no worthiness. The unsacrificial heart is not merely the consequence of self-interest; it is the consequence of a wrong and false self-interest. The true self-interest consists

in being worthy and mighty. And how can one be worthy and mighty if practically everything he possesses he devours himself? Is this the essence of individual righteousness? Can anyone with conscience and respect for himself respect and love such a soul?

Each virtuous act emanates from the sacrificial content, the elevation and power of the heart. No one is fully worthy unless his heart is filled with intense solicitude for sacrificial values, which are the essence of righteousness. Consequently, nothing proves and disproves the honor of the soul so clearly as righteousness and unrighteousness.

Righteousness is the path of sacrifice. Since sacrifice derives from Divine love, it affects our hearts mainly. And since righteousness is the path of sacrifice, it permeates the whole profoundness of the pure heart with sublime impulses. By reason of this fact a righteous act does not manifest the calm deliberation of the virtue of wisdom, but ardently insists on the necessity of rightness and justice.

We may call righteousness the impulsive conscience, because the sentiment of probity is full of ardor. It is the leading impulse in every worthy decision, judgment and desire. It always strives for the sublimest, truest and best. And in case of temptation, it exhibits to the soul the dangerous consequences of its fall and disgrace as well as the irremovable necessity for a

painful reparation and rehabilitation of the worthiness of the human character.

Profound conversions are moved by righteousness mainly. The keen disappointment in the proud and false standpoint maintained by the soul is caused by the sting of conscience, which tangibly proves to the guilty his utmost unworthiness. It proves to him that he is a robber with respect to honor and a fraud with respect to truth; it makes him conscious of his degrading self-deception with which he has deceived others.

Only then he begins to hate his passions with increasing fervor. Downcast, and often in extreme wretchedness, he looks less for human examples of righteousness, for they are not easily found, than for the inward Voice of God, which is ever-present. Here a virtuous teacher may help and a true friend may console, but nothing gives the full assurance of peace save God Himself.

If the sinful soul is not sensitive to the call of righteousness for the return to virtuous life, it will grow in spiritual callousness, which, with each delay becomes more and more difficult and painful to destroy.

Righteousness is the most vigilant virtue. Dwelling in the center of the soul's heart, it keeps unceasing contact with all other virtues. The slightest omission or neglect on its part bears the most unfortunate consequences, causes the keenest pain, and an irrepressible eagerness to atone for and to right the offense. Deep remorse, expiation of sins, and reparation for injuries

to Divine Majesty and to the rights and honor of man, is the demand of conscience in all those who are not depraved.

The manly character is stimulated and nourished by righteous impulses, which derive from virtuous energy and the sentiment of wisdom. It is their effectuation. Hence the fearlessness of the righteous impulse and the certainty of its viewpoint.

Righteousness is the incessant exercise of all virtues. Through righteousness must pass and express themselves all virtuous determinations, thoughts and sentiments, in order to prove their sacredness.

In humility righteousness proves its eternal ground, for nothing is so righteous as the whole-souled recognition of the divine gift of our participation in holy life. In fortitude it exerts its power, for without holy energy it cannot attain its full efficiency. In beatitude it confirms its assurance of rightness through immovable security and lasting peace and joy.

In order to have infallible clearness, righteousness cleaves to Divine Light and it consults wisdom in all conditions and circumstances. It always chooses the simplest, most truthful and modest way for its effectuation. Consequently, righteousness is the maker of a noble character and the most practical foundation of true merit and honor.

The virtuous soul endeavors to feel and cherish the power of righteousness within its own heart that it may

not fail whenever it is needed for a just cause. Just causes are objects of righteous sentiments and the failure to establish the highest cause of our life is due to lack of righteous sentiments and the love of justice.

The highest cause of our life is religion, the eternal bond of the soul with God. All other causes depend from this supreme cause and manifest their spirit accordingly. All that is righteous is religious and everything that is not righteous is not religious. No matter how strong the claims of the denominational spirit are for forming exclusive means of sanctification, if these means are not in strict conformity with obvious and simple righteousness, they in themselves are unjust and not sanctifying.

The spirit of God is the spirit of absolute justice, immovable in its superessence, dominating through its transcendence, and moulding everything existential according to the spirit of its unalterable decrees. No prerogative, no right and no liberty is tolerated before the Face of Divine justice, except the privilege, the right and liberty *of* justice constantly upheld by the duties *toward* justice. Justice is the rule of God and the love of this holy rule is the indispensable necessity of the virtuous heart.

THE VIRTUE OF GOODNESS

The final effect of all virtues in general and of love in particular is goodness. Its power consists in the spirit of holy solicitude for searching and seizing every opportunity to manifest the good will, the good thought and the good sentiment. It follows like a heavenly fragrance each virtuous blossom of the heart and exhilarates and asuages the most inward desires.

Each soul desires goodness, but nowhere can its full power be found save in humility, where the inexhaustible treasures of divine childship dwell. Humility, being the corresponding state to the supreme Divine gift of our divine childship, is the profoundest source of the soul's goodness. Therefore, faith in God is the proof of our goodness, devotion to God the very life of goodness and gratitude to God the breath and fragrance of goodness.

Thus also fortitude, with its inward energy, perseverance and triumphant power, is the virtuous process for the attainment of the highest Good, and beatitude its everlasting fruition. The invigorating and attracting power of goodness emanates from the collective powers

of virtues, and, being the final manifestation of them, is in itself the most expressive virtue.

The mind which searches for God, as the Supreme Principle of life, and which endeavors to conceive His holiest determination, His holiest light and His holiest love, is a far better, profounder and more powerful mind than the one which searches merely for fragments of psychic or natural manifestations. For this reason the good mind never ceases rising until it reaches the apex of light and never fears to enter into the profundity of life, which is based on the highest Good.

The Highest Good is no mystery. It is the most obvious existential object, which each soul is eager to attain, and which requires our constant attention. And the best attention of which the mind is capable is the attention to the inward Voice of God. There is no teacher or guide to compare with it. The sublimest words uttered by great souls are words arising from this inward Voice, in order to awaken and encourage the highest and best in the soul. Only the spirit of pride enshrouds itself in mystery for fear that its false face may be seen.

The cleaving to conscience is the good character of the virtuous mind. The application of our will, thought and sentiment to conscience is an act of wisdom, which effects not only righteousness but also goodness. Prudence is not wisdom, for its motive is that of defense and not of initiative or action. Wisdom tends to the

positive good and exacts the positive proof of the good deed, thought and sentiment. Each good and wise judgment must be true and just, but not inevitably prudent. There are many prudent men, but few wise and good souls. Prudence may or may not be a good expedient. At any rate it possesses no intrinsic character of virtue, as so many ascetics and moralists have claimed, but at best is only a defensive accessory to a good motive or cause.

From the standpoint of goodness, simplicity is that virtue whereby the truth of goodness and the goodness of truth are made real and evident. Thus sincerity is the simple manifestation of good will, veracity the simple attestation of the purpose of the good, and modesty the simple attitude which, in the self-consciousness of the absolute dependence from the Will of God, arrogates no ostentatious authority but always manifests calm dignity and unswerving truthfulness for the sake of sustaining the sublime might of goodness.

Love is the eternal fount of goodness. All that issues therefrom is essentially good. It rises toward heaven and, with inward grace, inclines toward our earthly souls. It is the flow of the "living waters" which cleanses, exhilarates and beautifies. Its streams are variegated through Divine Light and each hue and shade of this flow falls into the heart. Under this heavenly precipitation even the hardest heart yields and is moved to tears and willingness for good actions.

Everything is good where goodness dwells and everything is wrong where it is not. Love bears the fruit of goodness, and righteousness maintains it. The work of righteousness is the guarding of this fruit of love, and the soul that does not guard and uphold goodness is neither righteous nor good. Here the whole practical worthiness or lack of worthiness of the soul makes itself manifest. Our affinity to God, and our devotion and gratitude to Him, constitute our supreme dignity and, therefore, our supreme good. The guarding of this good is our supreme task and duty; for goodness is the essential accomplishment of the virtuous.

This virtuous accomplishment, being the spiritual fruit of the Love of God manifests the character of *benevolence* and *magnanimity*, *earnestness* and *enthusiasm* and *spiritual grace and beauty*.

BENEVOLENCE AND MAGNANIMITY

Benevolence derives from the inward sympathy of sacrificial sentiments and, owing to this origin, constitutes the first character of goodness. Sacrificial sentiments are faithful, devoted and grateful in their essence. They express virtuous spirituality which is full of good will.

Virtuous spirituality is never passive; it abounds in motives of the good. It is eager to express goodness and always searches for the opportunity to do the most good. Benevolence flows from the heart, therefore it appeals to the heart mainly. It seeks for the open heart that it may enter freely, or knocks at the closed heart, gently begging for admission. If admitted, it is full of communicating joy; if not, it feels wounded, retires calmly, but is never discouraged. Benevolence is full of mildness and tenderness, but it invariably perseveres as long as there is reasonable promise for the success of its beautiful mission.

Since the spiritual good is incomparably superior to material values, the benevolent heart of the virtuous soul seeks mainly to impart spiritual treasures. But the imparting of spiritual sublimity is often the most difficult of all tasks. It requires a great tact, or an

extraordinary force. Humanity in general is utterly unvirtuous. It wants no virtues; it loves no virtue. It fears virtue and at best it merely respects it. Thus the heart of man never opens readily unless it is bowed down by great grief or distress, and even then it seldom rises to great inward resolutions, and usually comforts itself through such sympathy and external assistance as it may receive.

Every soul is capable of such sympathy and assistance. But the virtuous man is capable of far greater service. He not only sympathizes, consoles and helps, but takes the poor, willing soul into his powerful arms of goodness and presses it to his virtuous breast, that he may communicate the divine throb which is in him. His words are not mere sympathy, soon to be forgotten, but the embracing power of the divine spirit. Then the suffering soul no longer sees a mere flicker, but feels the warming flame of truth. Its inward cry, "Lift me," a cry so often uttered before our parting, is answered, for it feels the tremendous lift of God through the minister of virtue. It is lifted through unreserved atonement and determination to live a purer, greater and holier life.

In this act the virtuous man proves himself to be not only the best teacher but also the most intimate friend, two characters so rare and yet so indispensable for the progress to sublimer life. Anyone can teach what he has learned by memory, but few can teach

what is acquired through righteous longing, profound study and incessant effort, hardships and tears; for only very few care to acquire profound spiritual experience and virtuous culture.

The virtuous soul lives mainly through virtuous experience and never neglects the beautiful path of benevolence. He never tires of his good actions and never weakens because of the absence of reciprocity. On the contrary, in his ever-increasing efforts, he rises to the beautiful height of magnanimity, with its concomitant generosity. Benevolence manifests goodness, and magnanimity and generosity overwhelm with goodness. It is like throwing the full weight of virtuous soulfulness into the other heart, thus causing astonishment and admiration for the grandeur of this virtue.

Our human life is not devoid of lesser magnanimities and generosity. However, the lofty heroism of virtue, through which the whole life is magnanimously offered and generously spent at the supreme altar of Divine glory and service to humanity, is the sublime character of great prophets, great teachers and great ministers of God. Owing to the elevation of their great consciences and the magnanimity of their great hearts, their mission is sanctioned by God.

Only a magnanimous and generous heart palpably feels the full importance, the full enjoyment and the full beauty of the life of heavenly values. Through its sacrificial greatness, magnanimity warms and expands

each willing heart and makes it strong and manly. Magnanimity sees human ingratitude, but it never wavers in its spirit and goes onward with its great work. Its temper is to win or overpower the little ones with beneficent greatness. And, finally, it overpowers and wins by the power of its unselfish love.

Glory to the prophets and sacred scriptures for infusing some portion of benevolence into the human heart, thus causing and spreading a gentler, more benevolent spirit in our human community. Nevertheless humanity is far from possessing the measure of benevolence which it needs in order to sustain its human honor and necessary harmony. The appeals to conscience and human honor for greater benevolence ought to be on the daily program of all religious, educational and national institutions.

Why is it that these appeals are so sporadic and weak? Is our conscience so dead and our honor so defiled that we cannot see benevolence as the last mark of the spiritual character of man? Surely, if we do not care for and do not exhibit the power of this character, humanity is doomed to the state of the brute. Nations, institutions, families and individuals have perished through disregard of benevolence; and they always do and always will perish, because this character of goodness predicates the last alternative; either thou art a human being or thou art not.

Symbols of benevolence should be one of the main

objects of poets and artists. Nothing is worthier, easier and more beautiful than benevolence and nothing more tender and sweet in our daily life. All men and women of noble character and even boys and girls should rally around its standard of eternal worthiness, to ward off the unbridled ambition and greed which are threatening the weak fabric of human institutions with complete destruction.

There is no possibility of evolving a plan for humanity until the divine spirit of benevolence receives a powerful impetus. This impetus can be obtained only through the profounder knowledge of conscience and the consequent necessity for sustaining our human honor, consisting in good will, unselfish mentality and a benevolent and magnanimous heart.

EARNESTNESS AND ENTHUSIASM

The truth of goodness manifests itself in its earnestness. Its chief motive is beneficence and spiritual service. Goodness imparts treasures of the heart, the most serious treasures we possess. Belittling and trifling with them evokes estrangement, the unfortunate barrier to sentimental approach and to the understanding and feeling of our brotherhood in God.

Each earnest soul feels this brotherhood in his heart and always endeavors to act according to this great sentiment of unity and mutuality. Only the proud man wants no unity and mutuality; all he wants is exclusiveness and dominion over others, and his seeming earnestness is nothing but cold heartlessness.

Nowhere is the earnestness of goodness so tangible as in the contact with human weakness, ignorance and insensibility to virtue. In this state the soul feels itself lacking in nobler impulses and inwardly longs for worthier life. Its position is dreadfully low, but not so low as to exclude the earnest desire to do good if it can. It is then that goodness seizes its hand and sends to the heart a virtuous thrill which warms and inspires the soul to good deeds. This performance

is very serious, because upon it depends the soul's rise or further fall.

The reason the average man takes so little interest in the rise of his brethren, is his lack of the virtue of goodness and, particularly, in the lack of understanding of its tremendous importance and purposes. Parents who do not instill goodness into the hearts of their children are not worthy to be called fathers and mothers. Any hireling can forbid when he has the physical authority to do so. Virtuous education is the most earnest task of our life. It teaches through the seriousness of humility, through the dignity, power and beneficence of its spirit, through serenity and loftiness of mind, through sublimity and righteousness of all virtues and through its candid and benevolent sentiment.

The sentiment of human brotherhood will never be realized unless we take serious notice of the great importance of goodness in our daily life. Until the stronger proves to the weaker that his strength is for the good of his brethren, that the interest in the common weal of man is his chief interest, that he, by the very sense and consciousness of his strength is conscience-bound to be the helper of the weaker man, no progress of humanity will be realized.

The failure to fulfill this simple duty is an actual denial of conscience and human worthiness. It is the affirmation of the ungodly selfishness so often shamelessly proclaimed as the first dogma of practical life.

Owing to this palpable fact, humanity is restless and the suffering majority of men are gloomy, intractable and often defiant.

If humanity has a right to the pursuit of happiness, it must first introduce and establish the ground for this pursuit, which is goodness, with all its power and earnestness. If this ground is not first established in our souls, all our pursuits cannot be otherwise than selfish.

The seriousness of this fact cannot be sufficiently impressed on all those who are, or at least ought to be, the leaders of human interests. They must remember that souls are no chattels in the hands of the stronger. The spirit of law demands that each soul be treated as a spiritual being, as a unit of our spiritual community.

The divergence of human characteristics and of the power of individual efficiency does not refute this necessity, it rather proves it. How can a poor and ignorant man rise and effect his usefulness to our common good, if he is not helped by the stronger and more enlightened? And where is the conscience and honor of the stronger and more enlightened if he does not fulfill this insisting duty of benevolence towards his fellow man? If he does not believe in benevolence, he is the most dangerous subject in any community and the most efficient propagator of human anarchy.

The power and joy of goodness is the most efficient

animator of the soul's honor, an honor which cheers and lifts to virtuous enthusiasm. Virtuous enthusiasm consists in great sensitiveness to everything that is good. At the slightest impulse of the good, it rouses the emotions of sentiments and never stops until the good aim is reached.

Virtuous enthusiasm is not a mere temporary outbreak, but the intrinsic course of benevolence, a constantly burning ardor of the virtuous heart which expresses its eternal youthfulness and vigor, always ready to live and to die for and to exalt the highest good. With each onward step in virtuous experience this soulful enthusiasm becomes calmer, more measured, more firm and more efficient. It becomes an enthusiasm which never swerves from its glorious course and whose ardor becomes more beautiful and harmonious.

Only the timid soul has no spiritual enthusiasm, and therefore hides himself behind the cold walls of material things, that the truth of his spiritual wretchedness may not be seen. Indeed, he, too, has had enthusiasm, but he has applied that beautiful ardor to passions which deceived him and left, as they always do, a mere spiritual wreck of existence. Instead of gathering virtuous experience, in order to lead others to a worthier life by his good example, lofty mentality and sentiment, he has become helpless, spiritually inefficient, weary of his lot, and finally passes out of this life with

little consolation and hope for his future station, and with no lasting proof of his great destiny.

Virtuous enthusiasm is the ravishing might of goodness, through which great deeds are accomplished with readiness and facility. It constitutes the reanimation of our affinity to God, a taste and touch of divine childship and an inkling of its power. It is the cause of great inward conversions, of sacrificial vows, of the fiery words of the prophets, and of that profound devotion to the holy cause of God and humanity which steps without fear or reluctance to the altar of sacrifice. Blessed is the soul possessed of this heavenly power, for its steps are sure and rapid toward the goal of eternal destiny.

SPIRITUAL GRACE AND BEAUTY

Goodness is the living spring of spiritual grace and beauty. It weeps with the mournful and wipes away the tears of sorrow with a gentle hand. It brings consolation into calamity, and comforts the gloomy and dejected. Goodness is the compassionate and most graceful messenger of heaven, that tenderly lifts up the downcast face of the deeply afflicted and with calm solemnity whispers: "There is a heavenly Father Whom thou hast forsaken. Whether thou knowest it or not, thou art His child. Rise and go to Him. I shall be with thee. He is waiting for thee." And like a faithful friend, goodness walks beside him, encouraging him and cheering his heart, until he reaches the gates of his celestial home.

There is nothing under all the suns that cheers so vividly as the virtue of goodness. It reflects not so much its heavenly might as its heavenly attraction. It heals the wounds of the heart and exhales a heavenly fragrance which is sweet and gladdening. The weaker souls are hungry for this divine effusion. The strong soul possesses it and with a generous hand distributes it to his needy brethren.

Rich is the soul in which goodness has established

its dwelling, for its riches are sacred and of life eternal; and its beauty is equal to its richness, because goodness is the crowning wreath and the final accomplishment of each virtue. Not only does it proclaim and prove the Divine goodness which causes it, but also unfolds the eternal splendor and magnificence of all virtues of which it is the eternal fruit.

Goodness is the sacred artist that teaches the power and grace of virtuous life. Virtuous life is a divine art, of which all other arts are but a plastic, graphic or phonetic reflex. It brings forth the harmony of virtuous life, with its inspiring and fascinating forms of thoughts and resonance of sentiments, which, according to the virtuous motives, manifest their characteristic grace and beauty.

The virtuous character of the humble is admirable. There is a total absence of assertiveness, loudness and self-interest; and yet it is full of appeal, penetration, and interest. Nothing penetrates and appeals so strongly to the good heart as calm unassertiveness, and nothing causes such profound trust and interest as the dependency on the Supreme Good and disinterestedness in worldly things.

This is the grace and beauty of humility which, in its faith in and devotion and gratitude to the Highest Good, evolves that beautiful attitude which is enrapturing. The faith of this soul cannot be shaken, its devotion cannot be interrupted, and its gratitude

cannot be distracted. The fact that the virtuous soul lives in faith, devotion and gratitude causes the spiritual appeal, dependence and harmonious beauty of the virtuous character.

The source of his harmonious power lies in the harmony of the forces of his soul with Divine Attributes; a harmony without which our life has the character either of a portentous drama or pessimistic tragedy, of an optimistic rhapsody or common burlesque. If conscience, honor, wisdom and love do not constitute the mainspring of all our motives, the characteristic expression of the soul is not a character, but a caricature, a distortion of what it ought to be.

The rhythmic breathing of this harmony is the expression of virtuous life, in which there is no place for the storms of passions. It is a steady, calm and holy enthusiasm, filled with inward hymnic songs of praise and gratitude to God and the constantly attracting re-echo of our divine childship.

In each better soul, this ever-sounding re-echo of divine childship is the divine promise of and virtuous hope for our future angelhood, where passions are unknown and where virtues are our constant power and habit; where spheres of worlds are set at our disposition to behold, to learn, to survey and rule according to the Will of God. For only in the most intimate cooperation with Divine Almightyness the consummate harmony of the soul with God is realized, and the power, fruit and

beauty of life is attained. Hence no soul is satisfied with the beauty of its life, and it never can be satisfied until its highest aim, this divine harmony, is attained.

In striving for divine harmony, the virtuous soul reveals the great power of his character. He clings to this harmony unyieldingly and, may outer conditions be ever so painful, he never permits himself to be distracted, much less dissevered from it. This harmony is his inward power, which not only astonishes the less virtuous but often causes him to follow with willing alacrity. Becoming conscious and sentient of this divine harmony, though it is not yet consummate in him, he desires no other bliss and beauty than the one bestowed by God on his inwardness.

Moving from his inward self-consciousness into the consciousness of all things created, the virtuous soul preserves the inward harmony of visions of all things seen, for everything he constructs in his intellect must be a shining reflex of his inward harmony with God. The virtuous always chooses the worthiest first, that he may be sure of the right gradation, and he always applies the innate, God-given rule of mental laws, in order to see the harmonious and beautiful correspondence of the intellectual faculties with the things conceived, and in order to feel the delight of this very correspondence, which is a distinct sign of the ever-present Love of God.

The soul-embracing correspondence with the Light

and Love of God constitutes his great reasoning power. Hence, he never is contented with any indistinct form, no matter how metaphysically or scientifically impressive it may appear, but descends into the profundity of the life of God in order to find the prototypical form of all essences and substances of relative life in the superessential and transcendent might of God Himself. This is the real logical induction, which only the virtuous intellect can attain. It requires the beautiful ardor of the holy tendency to Truth and Love to enable the intellect to see the prototype and the harmonious grandeur of all life.

With this harmonious will and mind, inspired, upheld and sanctified by God, the virtuous soul pursues the realization of his most beautiful task, the life of sacrifice. Being permeated with the self-consciousness and self-sentiency that all the good he has attained is the gift of the love of God, he, by this very fact, is joyfully willing to lead a life of giving to his utmost capacity.

Only the giver possesses great honor, power and joy and is able to manifest the magnanimity, benevolence, liberality and beauty of his heart. All he has received from God is there solely to be given; surely not indiscriminately, but wisely, to all who are in need of inspirational gifts. And since the heart of humanity is hardened through lack of those gifts, every man of nobler character should be inwardly conscious of

and permeated with this great duty to God and man. He should strive to become more virtuous, that he may be able to gain more energy for the elevation of honor, truth and righteousness, which each man demands from others, and which God demands from us all.

Only then shall we attain the profound appreciation of religious life, by virtue of which it will be possible to establish the spiritual groundwork of religious and social harmony. Then our life will be full of blessing, for it will be inspired and sustained by the might of virtues and crowned with their resplendent beauty. The ennobling growth of our character will lead us through unimpeded progress to the realization of the inward sense of brotherhood which constantly arises from the profundity of our divine childship. Then the eternal Voice of God will be followed, the final issue of religion loved, and the true destiny of honor and life fulfilled.

Our innate destiny is the Heaven of God, the mightiest and most glorious state of life, and no soul will be at rest unless it employs all its voluntary, mental and sentimental forces to attain the eternal goal of a perfect life in God.

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